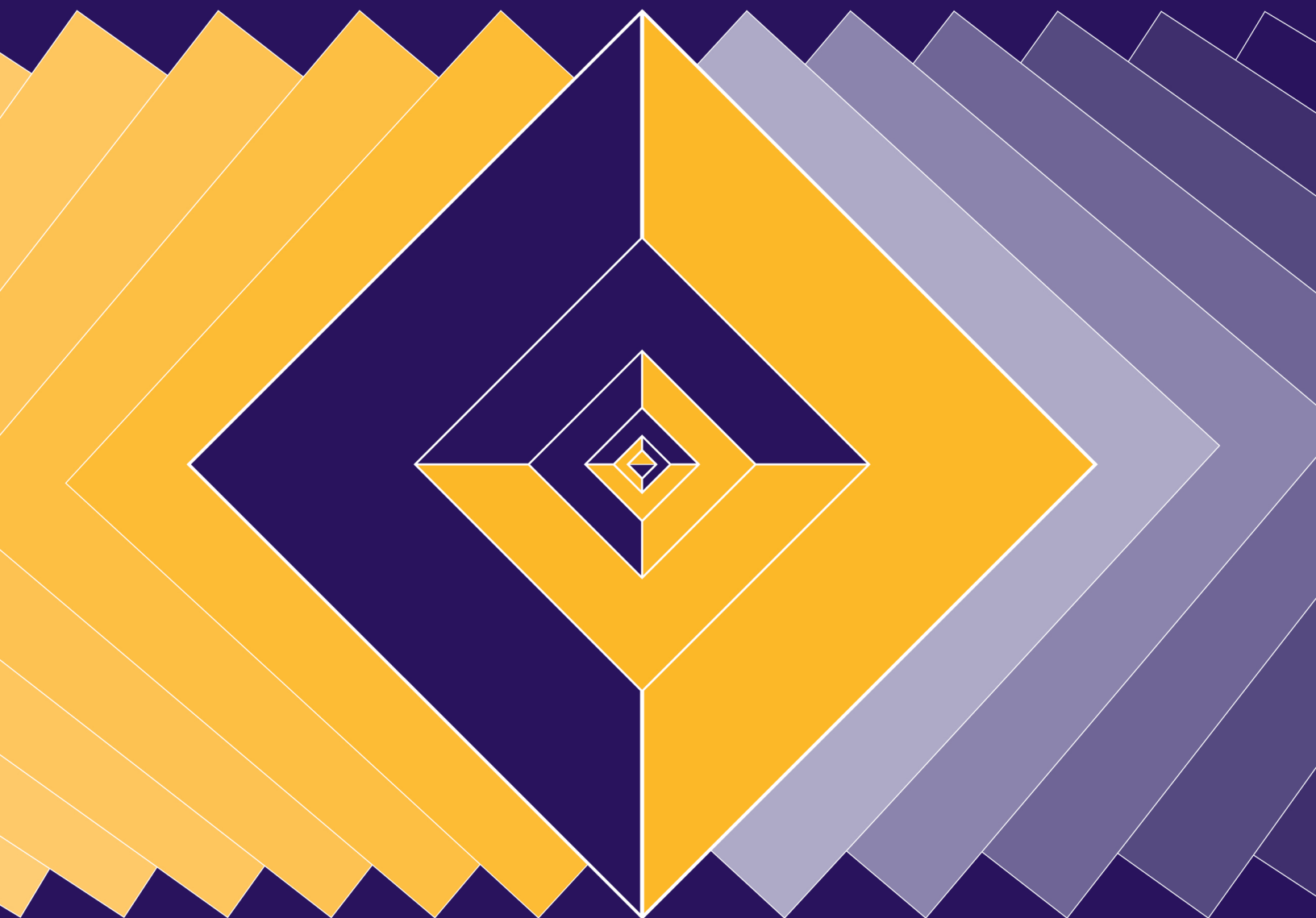




Kit 314

Processing Decisions for Manuscripts & Archives
November 2009



ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Processing Decisions for Manuscripts & Archives

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SURVEY RESULTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Processing is the heart of any special collections or archival program. When libraries speak of processing, they usually refer to “the process of organizing materials with respect to their provenance and original order, to protect their context and to achieve physical and intellectual control over the materials,” as defined by Kathleen D. Roe in *Arranging & Describing Archives & Manuscripts*.¹ Beyond this basic definition, processing must include prioritization among collections, determining the levels of arrangement and description for each collection, and establishing standards and best practices.

In recent years, attention has been called to the need for re-evaluating processing procedures in order to make collections more accessible to patrons. Archivists have shown growing interest in uncovering hidden collections and developing best practices to expedite processing in response to the 2003 ARL Exposing Hidden Collections recommendations and the minimal-level processing discussion sparked by Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner in “More Product, Less Process.”²

Ultimately, processing planning and management decisions become the essential building blocks for making these collections accessible to patrons. A review of the literature on processing reveals the big picture of arrangement and description, but not the specific details on practices or policies for processing special collections, manuscripts, or archival materials. Yet, managers and processing staff face an array of difficult decisions when processing materials. These decisions can include whether to adopt minimal processing standards to facilitate access or item-level

processing to facilitate digitization; whether to use traditional finding aids or technology-enhanced access methods; how to provide training in processing; and how to manage processing itself.

A review of the fundamentals of processing is necessary in order to understand how to answer these challenging decisions. What does it mean to process special collections, manuscripts, and archives? How are processing priorities determined? What are the steps to make these collections accessible and physically preserved? Finally, what should be the policy and best practices for processing these materials?

This survey was distributed to the 123 ARL member libraries in April 2009 and solicited information about current policies and practices for processing manuscript and archival collections in Special Collections. It was organized around four general areas: personnel, job responsibilities and training; processing policies, procedures, and priorities; impacts on processing decisions; and management tools. Seventy-six libraries (62%) responded to the survey by the May 8 deadline.

Processing Workflow

Half of the 76 responding institutions have a combined special collections/archives department and all but a few of these process all types of rare books, rare serials, manuscripts, and archival materials. At most of the institutions with separate special collections and archives units, special collections processes books, serials, and manuscripts, and archives handles the archival materials. Whether combined or separate, some book and serials processing activities are often shared with (or handled by) yet another unit. Twenty-seven

respondents (36%) indicated that rare books and rare serials were cataloged in another department or unit within the library, usually cataloging or technical services. Only five respondents indicated that manuscripts and archival materials were processed outside of special collections/archives.

Definition of Processing Terms

According to Slotkin and Lynch's article, "An Analysis of Processing Procedures," a collection is "processed" whenever it can be used productively for research.³ In practice, manuscript and archives processors have developed different definitions for "fully processed," "minimally processed," or "unprocessed" collections.

The majority of respondents agreed that "unprocessed" implied accession records only and sometimes an inventory list. However, definitions of "fully processed" and "minimally processed" range wildly among archivists. "Fully processed" was commonly defined as materials arranged and described to the folder/item level, all hardware (staples, paperclips, etc.) removed, and materials rehoused in acid-free folders and boxes. Fully processed collections may also include such descriptive items as a full MARC and/or MARC21 compliant record, an electronic finding aid (commonly EAD encoded), and a full descriptive finding aid (sometimes DACS compliant). A majority of respondents defined "minimally processed" as a collection having a brief inventory or box list, perhaps a brief MARC record and/or brief finding aid, and some rough organization. Some characterized this as a collection described to the folder level (folder titles) and reboxed in appropriate housing. It appeared that some institutions' "minimally processed" met the standards of other institutions' "fully processed." Supplementary terms used for minimal processing included: accession processed, preliminary processing, proactively processing, and pre-processing.

Some respondents indicated that their institutions had several different levels of processing beyond the terms in the survey. Others indicated that they treated "minimally processed" collections as "preliminary processed" collections, with the expectation of processing the collection more fully in the future. And finally, a minority of institutions rejects formal

processing categories in order to retain some flexibility in processing. One respondent declared, "We do not use formal definitions; we know categories when we see them."

Access to unprocessed collections

Sixty-nine respondents (92%) allow researchers to have access to minimally or unprocessed collections. One respondent clarified, "We don't 'advertise' unprocessed or minimally processed collections, but if a research question leads to the location of such materials, we do not, generally, restrict access unless there is some legal reason to do so." Another stated, "Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis."

Decision Makers

The majority of responding libraries (70 or 93%) indicated that the archivist and/or department or unit head in special collections/archives has primary responsibility for developing processing policies, setting priorities, and managing activities. Just under half include librarians and other professionals in decision making and 18 take a team approach. At a small number of institutions, support staff have some responsibility for developing policies and setting priorities, but more often they are responsible for overseeing the work of other staff.

Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of time spent on these activities by up to three key staff members. Developing policies and setting priorities each account for only about 5% of staff time; managing activities account for about 25%; the most time (50% to 75%) is spent on "other duties."

Setting Priorities

When asked what factors were considered in setting priorities for processing manuscript and archival collections, all but two respondents selected anticipated high-use of the collections and 80% ranked it as one of the three most important factors. The other two highest ranked factors were response to patron demand and institutional priorities. While the size of the collection is considered by a majority of respondents, only 21% ranked it as one of the most important factors. Interestingly, the least important factors considered

were consortial/collaborative activities (29 responses or 39%) and the digital format shelf life (20 or 26%). Some respondents noted that the experience, special skills, and number of staff can impact their priority decisions.

Other factors that significantly influence processing priorities include donor relations and outside funding. One respondent reflected, "Donor agreements that include processing deadlines and donor funding for processing are important considerations when setting processing priorities." Another indicated, "Donor expectations are sometimes considered, if a collection is particularly important. We do try not to make promises about when a collection will be processed, but it sometimes comes up in certain donor-related situations."

More than half of the responding institutions (44 or 60%) discuss requirements for access to collections and what materials need to be processed with their researchers. Others discuss priorities more casually. According to one respondent, "We do this informally and look to support the research efforts of our patrons whenever we can while still attaining other departmental goals."

Determining Levels of Description

"The goal should be to maximize the accessibility of collection materials to user," according to Greene and Meissner. When asked which levels of description have been used for manuscript and archival collections, all but two (71 or 97%) responded folder-level and most (82% to 86%) also use collection-, item-, and series-level descriptions, depending on the collection. One respondent explained, "The approach differs based on the presumed research value of the materials, on the degree of access restrictions which may be placed on the materials, and the time available to attain production goals."

When considering factors to establish the level of description for a collection or part of a collection, the three most important are patron access needs, anticipated high-use, and size of collection. One respondent who considers other factors noted that "the nature of the collection is a major factor in determining what is to be done." Other comments listed the complexity of

the organization of materials within a collection and digitization potential as other factors to be considered.

In "Accessioning as Processing," Christine Weidman argued that "time, budget, and personnel constraints at academic institutions render folder-level processing difficult if not impossible to complete for every collection."⁴ Yet when asked what factors are used to decide to process at the folder level, the majority of respondents indicated that this would be the ideal level for all collections. In addition, the folder level was considered an important aspect in providing patron access.

The size of collections factors into deciding to use series- and collection-level description, but not item level. Nine respondents indicated that the criteria for processing at the collection level included the size of the collection itself. Others discussed this level as "a temporary description, used to alert researchers to the existence of the collection." Criteria for determining series levels included the complexity as well as size of the collection. One respondent stated, "Series-level description must suffice to provide patrons with a detailed account of the series content and its relation to the collection as a whole." Yet factors for determining processing to the item level were anticipated high-use, monetary value, security, and format type. As one respondent explained, "Unless it's George Washington's signature on the invoice of an axe-maker, it's folder level." Two respondents reported that they never process anything at the item level.

When asked to describe how an institution determines the minimal level a researcher needs in order to use a manuscript and archival collection, the answers were widely varied. Many of the comments reflected that "the primary factor is size and uniformity—what is the lowest level at which we can convey the contents and the size allows a reasonable expectation that the researcher will be able to locate a specific item or group of materials without further guidance or description."

Impact of Online Access on Processing Decisions

Almost all respondents (59 or 89%) are marking up finding aids in Encoded Archival Description (EAD). When describing how encoding finding aids in EAD

has impacted processing decisions, one respondent claimed, "Use of EAD has forced greater consistency in processing practices" while another noted that, "We adjusted some processing policies to conform to EAD structure and online searching." Other comments ranged from "Does not impact processing decisions" to "There has been a steep 'learning curve' in training varied staff and building the technical infrastructure to deliver EAD records." Not all respondents (7 or 10%) are encoding in EAD and a couple commented that they have adopted DACS as a result of EAD implementation.

Among those hosting finding aids on the Web, whether in EAD or other format, many commented on the increase in research queries. One respondent commented that putting finding aids online "helped us determine which collections are used and impacts what we process." Another interesting comment from the survey discussed the advantage of making collections available in this environment, "With minimal processing, we've gone with the idea that some info is better than none and having any information on the Web will enhance access. Finding aids for full, minimally, or preliminary processed collections are posted. Ability to keyword search has probably made it easier to accept minimal processing as adequate for a collection ever to receive." There is a downside to online guides, as one respondent said, "Some researchers, seeing the online finding aid, expect the materials to be digitized as well."

Impact of Using Web 2.0 Applications

Using Web 2.0 applications and social software such as Facebook, Flickr, etc., does not seem to have much impact on processing goals at this point. One respondent commented, "2.0 tech has contributed very little of value to our collection descriptions, even though we employ these technologies as vehicles." Most of the respondents (32 or 64%) who employ 2.0 applications indicated that this does not impact processing decisions and many have "only begun to experiment with this." Other respondents (18 or 36%) are not currently involved in 2.0 applications.

Impact of Providing Access through Databases

Once again, the majority of respondents felt that the impact of providing access through databases was not a factor. Regarding bibliographic databases, many commented on being part of state or national initiatives, such as Online Archive of California, Archives Grid, and Archives USA. One respondent declared that databases are "becoming less significant as the volume of finding aids available increases and searching mechanisms are refined." As for databases created for access to collections, other respondents (8 or 15%) reported that they created databases that were "utilized internally" and not for "public access." Some noted plans to make these available online or to consolidate internal databases and that use of access databases meant item-level description, better searching capability, and better access for users to specific collections, such as photograph collections.

Impact of Archival Management Software

As for the impact of Archival Management Software, respondents agreed that this did not affect processing workflow. Some of the respondents (22 or 44%) are currently investigating or in the trial stages of using these types of software.

Impact of Digitization Projects

In 2000, Peter Hirtle stated, "The biggest single benefit that has arisen from our pioneering digitization efforts has been a tremendous increase in the use of digitized material. If you make special collections materials available via the Web with appropriate metadata and software, preferably for free, they will be used."⁵ When asked about the effect of digitization projects, one respondent agreed with Hirtle, "Put it up and they will come." Several others also agreed that digitization increase the use of collections. Additionally, some respondents (12 or 18%) were concerned that such projects would require item-level digitizing and description, thus requiring more resources and time. Some respondents also commented that digitization has had significant impact on processing, such as a greater need to include item-level description and metadata creation, and a change in how they determine processing priorities and level of processing.

Management Tools

Just over half of the respondents (39 or 54%) have a written processing policy for manuscripts and archival collections. Of the 33 (46%) who don't, 14 communicate standard practices verbally, seven by written procedure manuals, and five through hands-on training. More of the responding institutions (52 or 74%) have in-house processing procedures manuals and 51 have documents that list workflow steps.

Process Evaluation and Statistics

Thirty-eight respondents (53%) indicated that their institutions have procedures or tools to monitor and evaluate manuscript and archives processing activities. The types of tools and procedures included Excel spreadsheets, annual reports, and review of finding aids once they are completed by designated staff members. The vast majority of the responding libraries (68 or 94%) do collect statistics about processing. Most commonly they gather information about the number of accessions and the physical size of collections processed, followed by the number of finding aids digitized/encoded and the number of catalog records created/updated. Statistics are reported largely through annual reports and the annual ARL statistics.

Estimating Processing Work and Processing Metrics

When asked how libraries calculate the amount of time it takes to process manuscript collections, not one institution indicated that they followed Greene and Meissner's calculation "that a competent processing archivist ought to be able to arrange and describe large twentieth century archival materials at an average rate of 4 hours per cubic foot."⁶ A portion of the respondents use internal tools, past experience, past observations, and experiments to estimate processing time, while many of the Canadian libraries refer to the Canadian Council of Archives *Time Guidelines for Arrangement and Description Project*, published in 2007. Two respondents are using the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript processing manual to estimate processing rates (available online at <http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/manuscript/process/>). Still others have no standard way for calculating time or do not calculate time at all.

Only seven of the respondents (10%) indicated they use processing metrics—a formula used to measure or predict the success of outcomes—when making processing decisions. Of those who use metrics, one respondent compared the estimated time required with the actual time elapsed for processing. Another indicated that "this has worked best for use with relatively orderly collections."

Staff Training

Not surprisingly, 100% of the respondents checked "on-the-job" when asked how staff who are responsible for processing received their training. Other popular methods include professional association-sponsored workshops and library school, followed closely by peers, conferences, and professional reading. When asked the most important skills needed for processing, the majority indicated organization, attention to detail, and analytical skills. One respondent said it this way: "Resilience, flexibility, and intelligence: processing is as much art as craft and somebody has got to see the big picture before launching themselves on the myriad parts. In my experience, staff either has the instincts to be a useful processor or they don't. If they don't, it doesn't matter how much 'training' you throw at them: they still don't get the point."

Challenges of Making Processing Decisions

When asked to provide three challenges faced in making processing decisions, most respondents gave what were expected and unsurprising answers. One person's replies sum up these answers: "Adequate funding" and "Adequate staffing levels." This is a continual challenge and was put eloquently by one respondent, "An ongoing challenge is trying to process collections with insufficient staff. Acquisitions continue, but staffing remains at unchanging levels." Other common challenges include handling backlogs and related space issues.

In addition to the lack of resources libraries continue to face, respondents also report that technology is an obstacle to making decisions in processing collections. Issues of concern are born-digital materials, digitization demands, and media obsolescence. One respondent was concerned how to provide "access to and preservation of born digital archival materials

created by private donors and university offices.” Another discussed “stabilizing, migrating, describing, and maintaining born-digital collection materials, the new frontier portending major changes in the method and prioritizing of manuscript collections.” As for media obsolescence, one respondent observed, “We lack the equipment to transfer or read older forms of magnetic and electronic media.” Other respondents noted that digitization placed demands on already strained resources for archival activities.

Another challenge is the lack of paperwork related to older collections, which makes it difficult to ascertain the legal status of some of their collections. This lack of legal paperwork also extends to limited or no preliminary information about older unprocessed collections. One respondent noted that the “lack of information about collections in the backlog makes it difficult to make processing priority decisions.”

Conclusion

The survey responses speak to the classic issues of management: how to process collections efficiently but yet adequately so that collections are usable with minimal processing; how to balance demands for more description and item-level cataloging (digitization) with initiatives to make more collections available (“more product, less processing”); and how to manage staff effectively and to assess processing progress. From the survey results it is clear that the respondents agree on core principles for processing (such as what is a fully processed collection, what makes a good processor, and the challenges facing processors), but in practice the application of these principles is tempered by institutional practices, traditions, and resources. Where archivists tend to deviate from each other is in the application of some standards (such as metrics, statistics,

and standardization of processing and description), in the adoption of trends and new concepts in processing (databases for access, MPLP) and in handling outside demands (digitization, user needs). The application of archival methods and theories may indeed be more art than science. Archival managers and processing archivists must have the judgment and critical thinking skills (and the freedom to apply them) as an essential part of their tool sets in order to balance the various competing critical factors in managing the processing process.

Endnotes

- 1 Roe, Kathleen D. *Arranging and Describing Archives & Manuscripts*. Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2005: 11.
- 2 Greene, Mark A., and Dennis Meissner. “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing.” *The American Archivist* 68, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2005): 240.
- 3 Slotkin, Helen W., and Karen T. Lynch. “An Analysis of Processing Procedures: The Adaptable Approach.” *American Archivist* 45, no. 2 (1982): 157.
- 4 Christine Weidman. “Accessioning as Processing.” *American Archivist* 69 (Fall/Winter 2006): 275.
- 5 Hirtle, Peter B. “The Impact of Digitization on Special Collection Libraries.” Fleur Cowles Flair Symposium 2000, University of Texas, 3 November 2000, Austin, Texas.
- 6 Greene and Meissner, 253.

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

The SPEC survey on Processing Decisions for Manuscripts and Archives was designed by **Pam Hackbart-Dean**, Director, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and **Elizabeth Slomba**, University Archivist, University of New Hampshire. These results are based on data submitted by 76 of the 123 ARL member libraries (62%) by the deadline of May 8, 2009. The survey's introductory text and questions are reproduced below, followed by the response data and selected comments from the respondents.

Libraries, archives, and cultural institutions hold millions of items that have never been adequately described. A 1998 ARL survey of 99 member libraries revealed that significant portions of many special collections had not yet been cataloged or processed, especially nonprint formats. On average, 13 percent of microforms and 15 percent of printed volumes were unprocessed or uncataloged. The figures rose to an average of 27 percent of manuscripts, 35 percent of video holdings, 36 percent of graphic materials, and 37 percent of materials in audio format. These items are all but unknown to, and unused by, the scholars these organizations aim to serve. Ultimately, processing planning and management decisions become the essential building blocks for making these collections accessible to patrons.

According to the Society of American Archivists' *Glossary of Archival Terminology*, processing is the arrangement, description, and housing of archival materials for storage and use by patrons. Beyond this basic definition, processing must include prioritization, determining the levels of arrangement and description for each collection, and establishing standards and best practices. Once selection decisions have been made, processing is the heart of any special collections or archival program.

In March 2008 The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation granted CLIR \$4.27 million to create a national program to identify and catalog hidden special collections and archives. As interest in uncovering hidden collections grows, the special collections/archival community has been engaged in discussions about establishing guidelines or best practices to expedite getting collection materials into the hands of users. A review of the literature on processing reveals the big picture of arrangement and description, but not the specific details in practices or policies for processing special collections, manuscripts, or archival materials. Yet, managers and processing staff face an array of difficult decisions in the management of materials processing. These decisions can include whether to adopt minimal processing standards to facilitate access or item-level processing to facilitate digitization; whether to use traditional finding aids or technology-enhanced access methods; how to provide training in processing; and how to manage the process of processing itself.

These challenging decisions lead to a review of the fundamentals of processing. What does it really mean to process special collections, manuscripts, and archival materials? How are processing priorities determined? What are the steps required to make these collections accessible and physically preserved? Ultimately, what should be the policy and best practices for processing these materials?

This survey is designed to investigate current policies and practices for processing manuscript and archival collections (but not rare books and serials), including setting processing priorities; creating and implementing policies and procedures; and processing metrics.

PROCESSING WORKFLOW

1. Please indicate whether special collections, archives, a combined special collections/archives department, or another department/unit at your institution processes (as defined above) each type of material listed below. Check N/A if your institution does not process that type of material. Check all that apply. N=76

	N	Special Collections N=34	Archives N=22	Combined Dept N=39	Another Dept/Unit N=29	N/A N=2
Rare books	75	25	1	35	23	1
Rare serials	74	23	2	34	24	1
Manuscripts	75	32	15	37	5	—
Archival materials	76	20	22	37	3	1

If you selected "Another Dept/Unit" above, please name that department or unit. N=30

Rare Books N=22	Rare Serials N=23	Manuscripts N=5	Archival Records N=3
A very small amount of rare books processing is done by the "regular" library unit called "database management."			
Bibliographic Control and Acquisitions	Bibliographic Control and Acquisitions	Bibliographic Control and Acquisitions	Bibliographic Control and Acquisitions
Bibliographic Services, Rare Books Cataloging	Bibliographic Services, Rare Books Cataloging		
Book Cataloging	Book Cataloging		
Cataloging & Metadata Services Department	Cataloging & Metadata Services Department		
Cataloging Department (4 responses)	Cataloging Department (4 responses)		
Information Processing Center	Information Processing Center		
Library Technical Services	Library Technical Services	Library Technical Services	Library Technical Services
Metadata & Advanced Cataloging Team			

Rare Books N=22	Rare Serials N=23	Manuscripts N=5	Archival Records N=3
Monograph Cataloging	Serials Cataloging		
Rare Book and Manuscript Library	Rare Book and Manuscript Library as well as Book stacks		
Technical Services (7 responses)	Technical Services (6 responses)		
University Library, Print Cataloging Unit; Clements Library; Bentley Historical Library	University Library, Print Cataloging Unit; Clements Library; Bentley Historical Library		
	Acquisitions and Serials Department		
	Rare serials are located in several different libraries in the system.		
	Serial and Government Publications Division	The Rare Book and Special Collections Division and the Music Division also process manuscript material, as does the American Folk Life Division Veterans History Project.	
	Special Collections/Rare Books Section and General Collection Technical Services		
		Media Commons	
		Russell Library for Political Research and Studies	Russell Library for Political Research and Studies

Comments about which department/unit processes special collections and archives. N=41

1) The Special Collections Library, a unit of the University Library and holder of the primary general rare books collection, as well as important literary, theatrical, transportation history and social activist archives. We process and catalog manuscripts, archives, and non-book material. Most of the cataloging of our rare books and serials is done by a separate cataloging unit within the University Library, the Print Cataloging Unit, but some cataloging of them is done by Special Collections staff, as available. 2) The Clements Library, one of the country's most important repositories for books, maps, manuscripts, and archives related to American History, with a general cut-off date of 1900. Clements staff perform processing/cataloging for all four types of materials listed above. 3) The Bentley Historical Library holds the Michigan Historical Collections and the University Archives. Bentley staff perform processing/cataloging for all four types of materials listed above.

Acquisition records and bibliographic description for rare books and rare serials processing is conducted outside of Special Collections; all other aspects of housing and shelf preparation for rare books and rare serials are completed in the Special Collections department. Acquisition records for purchased manuscripts and archival records are created in the Acquisitions Department. Accession records for all manuscripts and archival records (purchases and gifts) are maintained by the Manuscripts Unit in the Special Collections Department. Arrangement, preservation, and archival

description (EAD) records are completed in the Manuscripts Unit in the Special Collection Department. MARC records are generated from EAD in the Manuscripts Unit, then transferred and completed for entry in the Library's OPAC by the Bibliographic Control Department.

Archives and manuscripts are described by archivists. Fonds and collection descriptions and finding aids are posted at our Web site, ACHEION, and CAIN (the latter 2 are union lists for Ontario and Canada, respectively). Fonds and collection descriptions are also accessible through the Library's online catalogue with URLs to finding aids. Rare books and journals are catalogued for the Library's online catalogue outside of the department.

Books and serials are cataloged by Central Technical Services (CTS); "manuscript" and "archive" collections are processed by Special Collections staff although CTS may create collection level records for the bibliographic database.

Each special collection processes its own manuscripts and archives. The University Archives is processed by the Western History Collections.

For rare books and serials, Special Collections shares responsibilities with two cataloging units for complete processing of these materials.

Formerly, the University Archives and Special Collections were in the same department. At present, although we share a reading room and stacks space, we are two completely separate administrative entities.

IU Bloomington has 2 large special collection units on campus: The Lilly Library and the Indiana University Archives. These units are separate from one another.

LSU Special Collections includes the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, a regional history collection that includes published and unpublished/manuscript materials. Our "Manuscripts Processing Unit" processes those collections. University Archives is also a part of Special Collections, and a separate unit processes the university records.

Manuscripts - manuscript unit & cataloging department. Archives - university archives unit. Rare Books - rare books unit. Georgiana collection - cataloging department.

Manuscripts and archival materials are arranged and described in their appropriate Special Collections unit, and catalog records are then prepared in the Special Collections unit of the Technical Services Department.

Most processing work is done in Archives and Special Collections. Cataloging and some metadata work is done in technical services.

Our Special Collections department is made up of 5 units: Rare Books, Manuscripts, Film & Media Archive, Modern Graphic History Library, and University Archives. All 5 units have archival collections that are processed by unit staff.

Printed books, serials, and ephemera are centrally cataloged; manuscripts (codices, documents, papers, records, etc.) and most photographs are cataloged by staff within the Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Rare Book and Serial Cataloguing is a combined function of two library departments, Special Collections and Cataloguing.

Rare books and serials processing are shared with Bibliographic and Metadata Services and Library Preservation.

Rare Books: 1 librarian for rare books; 1 FTE support staff; 1 PT book processor. Archives/Manuscripts: 5 FTE archivists; 4 project-specific archivists; 10 graduate interns; 4-6 student employees; 1-2 library program interns.

"Special collections" (an inherently problematic and fuzzy term) exist in many units of the library including University Archives, Illinois History Collection, Rare Books, Music, History, Biology, etc.

Special Collections and Archives at Northwestern were combined formally only recently. In practice, we function

somewhat independently. Special Collections handles rare books, serials, and manuscripts. University Archives takes care of institutional records and related manuscripts and also holds responsibility for institution-related serials and monographs.

Special Collections and University Archives are separate departments here.

Special collections and University Archives processes all manuscript materials. A cataloger from technical services catalogs periodicals and rare books with assistance from Special collections staff.

Special Collections Department handles the accessioning & acknowledgments/deeds of gift for all incoming archival material.

Special Collections Department processes materials in the Hawaiian Collection, Pacific Collection, and Rare Books Collection. Archives & Manuscripts Department processes materials in its four collections: University Archives & Manuscripts, Hawaii Congressional Papers Collection, Hawaii War Records Depository, and Japanese American Veterans Collection.

Special Collections in the MSU Libraries holds some manuscript and archival collections, primarily in support of our print collections. A separate unit, University Archives & Historical Collections, which does NOT report to the Libraries, also processes and holds archival materials.

Special Collections represents the combined formats of rare books, university archives, and manuscripts.

Special Collections Research Center which includes manuscripts, rare books, and university archives.

Technical Services processes rare books and serials; Special Collections processes manuscript and archival material; Special Collections processes additions to Poetry Collection, a division of Special Collections.

The cataloging section of technical services catalogs the rare books and serials.

The History of Medicine Division is a combine special collections division comprised of 3 sections: Rare Books and Early Manuscripts, Images and Archives (archives and manuscripts, moving images, prints and photographs, digital manuscripts), Exhibitions. Chief's Office has unaffiliated staff (Web programs, historians, systems).

The majority of special collections, associated monographs, serials and manuscripts, and archives records are processed in Archives & Special Collections. Cataloging and loading into local/OCLC of cataloging records is handled by staff from the Cataloging & Metadata Services team located in the Library (of which we are a unit but in a separate building).

The special collection unit of the Texas A&M University Libraries is the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives and it is a combined library.

The Technical Services Department consists of archival processing and cataloging staff (manuscripts and University Archives), rare materials catalogers, and technical services staff devoted to particular specialties; e.g., electronic records, jazz archives, Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture, film archives, and metadata and encoding.

The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library is comprised of the University of Toronto archives (corporate and personal papers of the UofT community) and the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (rare books, special collections, manuscripts, and personal papers). A separate department at the University is the Media Commons, which collects Sound and Moving Image collections, including manuscripts personal papers.

The Wilson Library Special Collections Technical Services Department is a recently integrated unit composed of rare materials, North Caroliniana, archival, and other catalogers (chiefly working in MARC) and of archivists who process both manuscript collections (personal papers and corporate records, including sizable photographic and recorded sound collections) and university archives record groups.

The work is done by the combined department although some rare books and serials are processed by the Cataloging Department.

Two departments process their respective special collections and archives.

Two departments: University Archives; Rare Books & Special Collections.

University Archives - responsible for administrative records of the University and private papers of individuals and organizations relating to the history of the University.

We are a combined manuscripts, University Archives, and rare book repository, called "Special Collections and University Archives." Processing of the manuscripts collections is managed by the Manuscripts Librarian, processing of university records is managed by the University Archivist. We now have a term-appointment Accessioning and Processing Archivist who is managing our accessioning procedures and also supervises processing projects.

We have one liaison cataloger from the Cataloging Department who catalogs all of our rare books and serials materials.

Western Archives (the combined department) deals with the vast majority of such items. The only substantive exception is the Music Library, which has a separate manuscript collection.

The rest of this survey will focus on manuscripts and archival materials only. It will not include questions related to rare books or serials.

Please indicate the department, unit, and/or library for which you are responding. N=76

Archives

Archives (Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Libraries)

Archives & Manuscripts Department (3 responses)

Archives & Special Collections (5 responses)

Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections

Cushing Memorial Library and Archives

Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation

Department of Special Collections

Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Harry Ransom Center - Archives and Visual Materials Cataloging

Images and Archives/Archives and Modern Manuscripts Program

Kelvin Smith Library Special Collections Research Center

L. Tom Perry Special Collections

Lilly Library

Mahn Center for Archives and Special Collections

Mandeville Special Collections Library

Manuscript Division
Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library
Manuscripts
Manuscripts Processing and University Archives
Manuscripts Unit, Special Collections
Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University Libraries
Medical Heritage Center
Rare Book & Manuscript Library (2 responses)
Rare Books and Manuscripts, Sheridan Libraries
Russell Library for Political Research and Studies
Special Collections (6 responses)
Special Collections & University Archives (6 responses)
Special Collections and Archives (2 responses)
Special Collections and Archives includes several departments, ranging from Rare Books and Manuscripts, to the Cartoon Library and Museum and to the University Archives
Special Collections Department
Special Collections Division
Special Collections Library
Special Collections Library and University Archives
Special Collections Research Center (5 responses)
Special Collections, Archives & Rare Books Division
Special Collections, MSU Libraries
Special Collections, University of Waterloo Library
Spencer Research Library Processing Department
Technical Services Department, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (Rare Books and Special Collections)
University Archives (3 responses)
University Archives, a unit of the new Department of Special Collections and Archives
University Archives; Rare Books & Special Collections
University Library, Special Collections Library
University of Louisville libraries

University of Toronto Archives
 Walter J. Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collection
 Western Archives
 Western History Collections
 William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections
 Wilson Library Special Collections Technical Services Department

DEFINITION OF PROCESSING TERMS

2. Does your library have an established definition of the terms “fully processed,” “minimally processed,” and/or “unprocessed” as they relate to manuscript and archival materials in the library collections? Check all that apply. N=75

	N	Yes N=70	No N=20
Fully processed	75	65	10
Minimally processed	71	53	20
Unprocessed	74	70	5

3. If you answered Yes above, please enter a brief definition of the term. N=69

Fully processed material N=64

100% of material is processed.

A finding aid and “I-level” MARC record exist.

Accession record; full inventory with creator sketch, scope and content, container list, and indexes; MARC record; and online EAD finding aid.

Accessioned, cleaned, preservation work, foldered, boxed, file level inventory, completed finding aid which is mounted on Department’s Web site.

All arrangement, description, and preservation steps completed.

Appraised, separated material removed, arranged (series-subseries-folder schema), and described in a finding aid and a MARC record.

Archives: fully arranged and described and for which there is a RAD-compliant inventory; RBSC: online and accessible by public.

Arranged and described (MARC record and finding aid).

Arranged and described with EAD encoded finding aids.

Arranged, described, inventory and finding aid available.

Arranged, properly housed, Finding Aid available online at predetermined levels.

Arranged; archival re-housed; register & container list; MARC record(s).

Arrangement completed. Described at the fonds or collection level description with a finding aid.

Assessed; organized; properly housed in appropriate folder, box; described in a finding aid and inventory; record in OPAC; description on Web site with link to finding aid (varies by collection).

Boxed and foldered in acid free materials with folder level description and a DACS inventory.

Collection has been appraised, processed intellectually and physically, and a finding aid has been produced.

Collection has been arranged and described at least to the folder level. Inventory includes biographical note, collection overview with series descriptions, full container list, and subject headings.

Collection has been gone through in some depth.

Collection has undergone review for level of processing; arrangement and description process has been implemented; an EAD finding aid has been created and mounted on the Web.

Collection is arranged and rehoused totally in archival containers and enclosures; contents described to the folder or item level.

Collection register prepared; complete processing down to the item level.

Collection rehoused, media identified and separated, and all portions of the collection represented in electronic finding aid to the series, box, or folder level as determined necessary by staff.

Collections that have been processed.

Complete finding aid in EAD served to the public. Processing intensity varies, but aimed toward maximum possible within resources available.

Complete finding aid/MARC record with organized series.

Complete inventory at least to folder level, in appropriate archival containers.

Completed electronic finding aid, Web accessible, some paper finding aids.

Completed finding aid.

Completely organized, foldered, inventory made.

Completely processed at folder or series level with EAD encoded finding aid.

Descriptive item cataloging.

EAD finding on OAC or full paper finding aid.

Finding guide to at least box and folder level. Weeded of extraneous material and fully organized in acid free boxes and folders.

Folder level list, full descriptive notes.

Folder-level description with a full DACS-compliant finding aid that is available online, plus a full record in the OPAC.

Full description and file list, fonds-level description on Web site.

Full finding aid (biography/history, scope/content, inventory), full physical processing (collection housed in acid-free boxes and folders).

"Fully Processed" refers to material that has been arranged and described at the fonds, series, and folder level, has been transferred to appropriate archival folders/boxes and other enclosures.

Fully processed – donations of manuscript material that have been appraised, arranged, preserved, described, and made available to patrons.

Has a complete finding aid in EAD posted on our Web site, OCLC record, and record in the local ILS.

Having a preliminary inventory containing series divisions and container lists and posted to the MU Archives Web site.

Includes rehousing, arrangement, description that includes a finding aid with box lists placed online and a catalog record.

Items that have been individually cataloged.

Level 3 processing, DACS "Multilevel Optimum Added Value" level used for finding aid, MARC record, and EAD.

Level 4: Intellectual control over entire collection; folder-level control; full finding aid; MARC record; Wikipedia links/entries.

Material arranged, housed, and described according to prescribed institutional procedures.

Material has been accessioned, fully processed and a description and finding aid is available online or in the Library for researchers to consult.

Material is available for use and has online records in the OPAC.

Materials rehoused into archival boxes, a summary Archon record prepared, and a box and folder level listing prepared. Meanwhile, it may have had partial refolding and removal of paper clips.

Materials that are fully processed have a finding aid that describes materials to the folder or item level and a catalog record. The arrangement of these collections often involves extensive reboxing and rehousing of materials.

Materials that have been organized to the subseries or folder levels and for which basic preservation, arrangement and description has been performed. These have finding aids and are queued for cataloging.

Materials that have been reviewed, weeded and described to the folder or item level.

New containers and folders, published finding aid or inventory.

Organized and inventoried to folder level with folders labeled; placed in durable folders and document boxes.

Organized into any series, any conservation work completed, described to the folder level, rehoused, finding aid and catalog record completed.

Reboxed and refolded using acid free materials; arranged and described, usually with folder-level finding aid; has collection-level description entered on OCLC and local online catalog.

Records/papers refolded, reboxed, and labeled; finding aid completed.

Refolding, reboxing, formal arrangement, detailed biographical/historical information, scope and content notes, container lists of content at folder and/or item level.

Rehoused in archival boxes and folders with fasteners removed; individual preservation or conservation treatment or

reformatting carried out; fully screened for personally identifying information; arranged into series or original order kept as appropriate; complete finding aid including summary, bio, scope and content, series descriptions, index terms, and a container list to the series, sub-series, or folder level, as appropriate; catalog record locally and in WorldCat.

Rehoused, arranged, fully cataloged, finding aid if necessary.

Reviewed, sorted, weeded, staples and clips removed, housed appropriately, conserved where need.

The collection has been organized, rehoused, cataloged, and a finding aid prepared.

The manuscript collection has a completed EDA finding aid published to the Web, all materials have been secured in labeled archival boxes and preservation has been completed on the collection. The collection is fully available for public use.

Weeded, sorted, arranged, reboxed and foldered, preservation measures done, detailed guide, EAD, in Online Archive of California.

Minimally processed material N=53

A detailed accession record has been created and some work done to arrange and describe the collection at the series level; no EAD finding is created.

Accession record; preliminary inventory with scope and content and container list; and online EAD finding aid.

Accessioned, refoldered, boxed, box level inventory.

Appraised, some separated material removed, minimally arranged (series-level or original order), and broadly described in a finding aid and/or a MARC cataloging record.

Archival enclosures are not used (except record storage boxes); collections are not rearranged in detail; description to folder level or box level.

Arrangement or preliminary arrangement completed. Described at the fonds or collection level description.

Arrangement, housing, and Finding Aid at collection and container level; requires help to use.

Assessed; described in inventory; record in OPAC; described on Web site (varies by collection).

Box level list, minimal descriptive notes.

Box list.

Box list and MARC record.

Box list and some weeding.

Box-level/Folder-level inventory, some intellectual control, materials not all housed in acid-free folders or boxes.

Boxed in acid free boxes, brief description or box level inventory.

Box or series-level description, with a full catalog record in OPAC, and if of sufficient size, a DACS-compliant finding aid (with scope and content not, biography/administrative history, etc.)

Brief description equivalent to <archdesc><did> and <controlaccess> posted on our Web site, with stabilization and some arrangement of collection.

Brief inventory.

Brief records; acquisition records.

Collection may have components that are not arranged or refoldered. Description may only be at the series level.

Collection register prepared; collection processing to the folder level, however, some folders may be processed to the item level, e.g., Correspondence folders.

Combination level 1 & 2, DACS "Single-level Optimum Added Value" level used for finding aid, MARC record, and EAD.

Container list - finding aid/MARC record.

Description (preliminary or complete) but little or no arrangement or preservation.

File list and brief description.

Full inventory of collection available, collection level records available on-line.

Has a container list in EAD format posted on our Web site, OCLC record, and record in the local ILS.

Have folder list, but no, or very little, other processing.

Having a summary description with container lists and posted to the Archives Web site.

Less than 50% of materials are processed.

Material accessioned, rehoused in acid-free cartons, and minimally described at the box or folder level.

Material is processed for monetary appraisal (gift list) but not yet publicly available (donation and full cataloguing is still in process).

Materials described at the box or series level, with little or no review to the folder or item level.

Materials have been accessioned, rehoused/or re-folded and an accession note is available on line. The materials are available for "on-demand" processing.

Materials that are minimally processed have a series-level finding aid and a catalog record. The arrangement is largely intellectual and there is limited rehousing of materials.

Materials that have finding aids and are queued for cataloging, but that have not been extensively arranged or described. Often arrangement and description may be at the box or series level.

May include new boxes, a finding aid with front matter and an inventory.

No arrangement. Collection is not refoldered unless in poor condition. Minimal preservation work. Provide just enough physical preparation and description to make collection available to the researcher.

Placed in record cartons, usually in original folders, inventoried to box level.

Portions of the collection may be rehoused, at most a box inventory has been created. Staff has a reasonable understanding of the contents of the collection.

Processed at collection level.

RBSC: online access by title or author only.

Reboxed using acid free materials. Minimal description; may have box-level finding aid.

Reboxed with a preliminary inventory.

Rehoused in archival boxes, but original folders may or may not be changed out and only obviously rusting fasteners removed; usually kept in original order; finding aid including summary, bio, scope and content, index terms, and a container list at the box level or transcribing creator's folder labels, as appropriate—much of the narrative description elements likely to come from "accession description," the description created by the curator upon initial review of the collection for acquisition; catalog record locally and in WorldCat; little individual level conservation or preservation; targeting parts of the collection likely to have privacy issues for screening; catalog record locally and in WorldCat.

Rehoused, not described to the folder level, no conservation work performed, finding aid and catalog record completed.

Rehoused, preliminary box list, preliminarily cataloged.

Reviewed, rehoused in standard size boxes (e.g., Cubics or 5" record boxes) if needed, not sorted, weeded or refolded, no conservation, no staples or clips removed.

Rough organization, grouped by types, general dates.

Roughly arranged with a brief "core record" description.

Same as above, but with no refolding, briefer box and folder list, and paper clips not removed.

Some work done - brief description and/or accession or container list, and possibly some combination of the above.

The collection has a preliminary inventory completed, but has no online finding aid. It has not been transferred to archival storage containers. Preservation has not been completed on materials needing preservation attention.

Two categories. 1: Level 2-3: Combination of box and folder lists; macro intellectual control as opposed to a more granular sense; finding aid; MARC record; Wikipedia entries/links; and 2: Material accessioned as processed (organizational records/University-related records).

Unprocessed material N=69

0% of materials are processed.

A "box list" and "K-level" MARC record exist.

A brief accession record has been created but no work has been done to arrange or describe the collection.

Accession record and any accompanying list(s).

Accession record and shelf location — awaiting fuller examination.

Accession record only.

Accession record, title, box level list.

Accession-level record with little arrangement or description.

Accessioned and may include a box level inventory.

Accessioned and stored for future processing.

Accessioned only. (3 responses)

Accessions are considered unprocessed.

Accessions with no discovery/access tools (except accession register listing).

As it came in the door.

Boxed in acid free boxes with accession record only.

Brief catalog record created; temporary accession number assigned.

Collection has not been arranged but may be described with a catalog record and/or a preliminary inventory (container list).

Collection is accessioned; it is given an accession number but no call number; collection is described for internal and donor needs in a preliminary box list or box and folder list; it is not sorted, weeded, or arranged.

Collection level record or no record at all.

Collection may or may not have been appraised. It has not been physically or intellectually processed beyond re-boxing in some cases.

Donations that have not been processed.

Has a container list for local, in-house use only.

Having no presence on the MU Archives Web site and not yet fully accessioned.

Housed in archival boxes and some times has been rehoused in archival folders; "accession description" perhaps with rough box list; catalog record locally and in WorldCat for manuscript collections, but not university records.

In original containers; has no finding aid.

In various physical stages of processing, some with catalog records, some with only in-house inventories.

Lacks anything but the most basic description in OPAC, unsorted and untouched.

Limited / Brief finding aid.

Little assessment; brief internal description (varies by collection).

Material accessioned, rehoused depending on condition, and minimally described at the collection level.

Material that has not been processed.

Materials have an accessions note in the database and re-housed. They otherwise remain in the condition in which they were received.

Materials that have been accessioned, but for which more detailed organization and preservation has not occurred and for which finding aids and catalog records have not been created.

Materials that lack any kind of finding aid, aside from a very general description in an accession record.

May have a brief appraisal, accession report created, may be re-housed, some separated material removed.

Neither of the above.

No inventory whatsoever. (2 responses)

No arrangement or description.

No box list; no record. This applies to very few collections, primarily current incoming collections.

No cataloging or processing.

No intellectual or physical control whatsoever.

No inventory or only a partial inventory of the collection.

No listing at all.

No listing other than an accession record; awaiting processing.

No publically accessible form of description. All internal controls.

No summary Archon record, no box and folder list, and still in transfer cartons.

No work done.

Not discoverable or usable by patrons.

Not yet removed from original packing materials; no inventory that provided by donor or institution.

Not yet worked on, after being donated to library.

Nothing done to the collection.

RBSC: not online and not accessible by public.

Register/Finding Aid not prepared; collection unprocessed and not yet rehoused.

Rehoused in standard size boxes (e.g., cubics or 5" record boxes) if needed.

Still in order it was received in; sometimes has been transferred to archival sources, but no arrangement/description has been done.

The collection has been accessioned, with all necessary donation/ownership agreements in place. Any restrictions have been identified. All the materials are in the physical control of the UNM Center for Southwest Research.

The collection has not received any of the above.

The collection is housed as received, no intellectual access.

These materials generally have an accession record and nothing else. Sometimes there is a box list.

Title/author level description only or no description.

Two categories: 1: Material that was "processed" prior to 2004 (item-level control of subjectively selected correspondence, little to no control over the remainder of the collection; irregular finding aids; brief MARC records; and 2: collections received from donor/purchase with no formal organization or arrangement.

Unarranged and undescribed.

Unprocessed – donations of manuscript material awaiting all or some of the following actions: appraisal, arrangement, preservation, description, access provided.

"Unprocessed" refers to material for which an accession record only has been created.

Unsorted; no re-housing into archival folders and boxes; no register; no MARC record(s).

Usually box list, but nothing else.

Please enter any other terms used to describe different levels of processed materials and their definition. N=17

Accessioned processed.

Before collections are processed, a review is undertaken to determine the level of arrangement and description; the default is folder level but sometimes we process at series or item level.

Box (or container) level: university archives often uses this level to describe the contents of the box for minimally processed collections in order to provide access to researchers.

Level 1 — Provide just enough physical preparation and description to make collection available to the researcher.

Level 2 — A series level arrangement if collection warrants. Assignment of index terms, brief biographical/historical description, and scope and content notes. Level 3 — Refoldering, reboxing, formal arrangement, detailed biographical/historical information, scope and content notes, container lists of content at folder and/or item level.

Levels 1, 2, and 3 physical and intellectual control. Level 1: Accession record, inventory list, preliminary inventory, processing record Level 2: Level 1, plus series level arrangement, box level preservation, finding aid, MARC record, EAD Level 3: Level 2 plus DACS "Multilevel Optimum Added Value."

Past practice created in-house card catalog descriptions of fully processed materials.

"Preliminary container list available. Please consult manuscript librarian for assistance."

"Preliminary processing" is another term used here to denote what would now be called minimal processing but with the expectation that it would receive full processing in the future. Preliminary processing was considered a still unprocessed state. We have found that many collections that received preliminary processing in the past can now be considered processed under minimal processing guidelines and removed from the backlog and be considered a processed collection.

Pro-actively accessible: 1. Collection arranged to most appropriate intellectual level—series, subseries, folder, item, etc. 2. Material housed in alkaline folders and document cases or other appropriate archival containers. 3. For non-paper material, the originals are appropriately stored and use copies are available. 4. Preservation steps taken as required. 5. Full collection guide prepared. 6. Full MARC record produced. 7. Collection may be digitized. 8. Collection screened for security and sensitivity concerns and appropriate action taken. Adequately accessible: 1. Collection guide prepared, with at least descriptive summary, administrative information, biographical/historical note, collection scope and content note, and folder or box list. Series may or may not be established. Description will generally extend to the individual folder level. 2. Material housed preferably in document cases (occasionally in records center cartons) or other appropriate archival containers. Original file folders are retained if in good condition and labeled accurately. 3. For non-paper material, originals are appropriately stored and use copies can be made on request. 4. MARC record produced or modified. 5. Security, sensitivity, and preservation concerns considered and basic steps taken to minimize risks that may exist in one or more of these areas. Not accessible: 1. Information about the collection is haphazard, incomplete and possibly incorrect. 2. Material housed as received. 3. No existing public finding aid. 4. Security, sensitivity, and preservation concerns have not been assessed. Inadequately accessible: 1. Preliminary inventory prepared, with available information, including descriptive summary, administrative information, biographical/historical note, collection scope and content note, and box (or other container) list. Description will generally not extend to the individual folder level. 2. Security, sensitivity, and preservation concerns considered and plans made to minimize risks that may exist in one or more of these areas. 3. Material housed as received. 4. Basic MARC record produced or modified.

Processing divided into tiered system: Level 1 Description: MARC record; if it exists, legacy finding aid/list untouched. Arrangement: None. Preservation Issues: None. General Guidelines: Organizational records are accessioned as

processed; Boxes barcoded and sent to offsite. Level 2 Description: MARC record; Finding aid and box list; full description where practicable. Arrangement: Intellectually arranged (series level); generally no refoldering; metal, tape, etc. Stays; no appraisal. General Guidelines: Assess physical extent to determine any need to rebox; Boxes barcoded and sent to offsite; does collection have some research demand?; on processing wish list? Notes: Unless egregious and obvious, preservation neither noted nor addressed; presence of AV/digital noted but not addressed. Product: 35–50 l.f./month. Level 3 Description: MARC record; finding aid; full description. Arrangement: Combination of intellectual and physical arrangement (series/sub-series level); combination of box and folder level control. Preservation: Refolder if needed; flag egregious needs; metal, tape, etc. Stays; minimal appraisal (duplicates). General Guidelines: On processing short list?; accessible in current form?; staff to dedicate to project? Notes: Presence of AV/digital noted; not addressed Product: 23–30 l.f./month. Level 4 Description: Finding aid; full description; MARC record. Arrangement: Folder-level control. Preservation: folders/archival boxes; preservation needs referred to conservation; metal stays; full appraisal, AV/images/digital addressed. General Guidelines: on processing short list?; compelling justification (funding: administrative priority?; is collection in demand?; faculty demand/support?); outreach component?; curriculum support? Product: 11–15 l.f./month.

Single manuscripts and codex manuscripts are considered either cataloged or uncataloged (has or does not have a MARC cataloging record).

The above terms apply generally to folderable and boxable documents. There are collections, however, for which an inventory, even at the piece rather than folder level, does not adequately expose content. I think, for example, of a collection of scrapbooks 1890–1920 in which theater manager pasted weekly reports on programming. These are well described at the volume level, but the real — and very important — content is in the performer names and performance descriptions, and only deep indexing would provide adequate access.

We do not use formal definitions: we know the categories when we see them.

We have 4 processing levels: Accession-level control (Established at time of acquisition with basic collection information taken from the accession record. May have box list.) Box-level control (Materials sorted as to particular form or in rough series—rarely used.) Folder-level control (Materials are arranged into series order, properly foldered and are described at the folder level, but little or no effort made to sort within folders. A complete finding aid produced (includes title page, table of contents, administrative information, creator's sketch (biographical/historical note), scope and contents note and intellectual/physical arrangement). A complete catalog record and EAD version of the finding aid are created). Full intellectual and physical control (Materials are sorted and arranged by series and sub-series, refoldered and reboxed. Records are properly arranged within each folder. Collection is described at the box and folder level and a complete finding aid produced (includes title page, table of contents, administrative information, creator's sketch (biographical/historical note), scope and contents note at various levels and intellectual/physical arrangement). A complete catalog record and EAD version of the finding aid are created).

We purposely don't have definitions because not having them helps us remain flexible and responsive to the needs of any given collection (or part thereof). So we're comfortable with saying that a particular collection is "fully processed" when the same treatment applied to a different collection might result in that second collection's being "minimally processed." Not having definitions also helps us explain to curators, public services staff, other colleagues, and even donors how we operate.

We tend to see this as a continuum, with most collections somewhere between unprocessed and fully processed.

We typically use the terms pre-processed and processed instead of minimally and fully (and add post-processed for those collections we revisit, update, or otherwise alter). "Minimal" sets the wrong tone and too often guides archivists to aspire to the minimum.

4. Do researchers have access to minimally processed or unprocessed collections? N=75

Yes	69	92%
No	6	8%

Comments N=50

Yes

Access is provided to unprocessed material only if we own it (the donor has signed a memorandum of agreement) or if the donor has given permission for research access (memorandum of agreement not yet signed).

Access provided after review for confidential materials such as social security numbers, bank account numbers, student ID numbers, etc.

Access to minimally or even unprocessed collections are provided by Hargrett Library Staff.

Access to minimally processed collections only. We require that there is some level of physical and intellectual control before granting access.

Access to unprocessed is permitted only if it is known that the collection does not contain restricted material.

Access to unprocessed materials is decided on a case-by-case basis.

Access to unprocessed or minimally processed materials is at the Curator's discretion but they are potentially available for research unless otherwise stipulated in the Deed of Gift or Deposit agreement.

Advance permission by the University Archivist. Close supervision by archival staff.

Before we allow access to unprocessed or minimally processed collections, we review records at folder level to ensure that no restricted or confidential data is released.

By appointment with curator.

By prior arrangement.

Collections that are minimally processed are completely accessible to the public unless there are restrictions on the collection. Unprocessed collections are available with the permission of our Supervisor of Reference Services.

Each unprocessed collection has an inventory for minimal access to the materials.

Every effort is made to provide access.

Generally we permit this, but we decide on a case-by-case basis and there may be circumstances in which it is contra-indicated. In those cases, we would likely attempt to give processing high priority.

Generally yes, but some processed and unprocessed collections have access restrictions.

If someone knows we have something that is not yet processed, we try to make it accessible when possible.

If we can provide a box list so researchers can identify what materials they want to see, we will allow them access (if no restrictions apply).

Minimally processed - yes through MARC record. May then contact Special Collections and a box list is then often sent.
Unprocessed - no, unless contact the department.

Minimally processed are available immediately. If unprocessed material is requested, we put it on a fast track to get it processed.

Minimally processed—yes; unprocessed collections—access allowed only to very small unprocessed collections, at our discretion.

Minimally processed, yes; unprocessed, not without special permission.

No differentiation between access to fully or minimally processed collections; Our policy on access to unprocessed collections is as follows, also available at <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/unprocessed.html>. Patrons may not access unprocessed manuscript collections, photographic collections, or record groups without the express written approval of Curator of Manuscripts. In the curator's absence, the Head of Special Collections, Associate Dean of Libraries, or the Dean of Libraries may authorize access. Before we can provide access to an unprocessed collection, staff must review it for sensitive and private information such as social security numbers and medical or academic records, as well as for materials covered by donor-imposed or legal restrictions. Due to limited staff resources, a single patron may request a maximum of seven linear feet for review per collection per semester. Upon receipt of a request, this review will be completed as quickly as staffing allows and in most cases within fifteen working days. In some instances, screening materials for compliance with restrictions requires a closer review of materials and may take longer.

Only in some situations. It depends on the collection value, size, physical condition, and to some extent how usable its original order is.

Pending reference interview with manuscript librarian.

Researchers have access to open or unrestricted collections but hitherto we have not advertised.

Researchers have access to SOME BUT NOT ALL minimally processed or unprocessed collections. We do not provide access to unprocessed collections that may possibly contain restricted information or that have serious preservation or organizational issues.

Researchers have access to some minimally processed collections but not to unprocessed collections.

Researchers may access minimally/unprocessed collections by request. Unprocessed collections are reviewed by library staff prior to access.

Researchers may look through boxes even if the materials are not processed.

Since unprocessed collections can contain restricted materials, boxes requested by researchers are reviewed prior to access by the Archivist.

Some unprocessed manuscript collections are available to researchers with staff supervision.

Sometimes - it depends on the collection and its original order.

The exception would be collections likely to contain sensitive or confidential information.

There is access to minimally processed materials. Unprocessed collections may be made available under very special conditions.

They certainly have access to minimally processed collections, but they don't have access to materials that have not been reviewed at all. In this, we work closely with members of our public services and curatorial staffs.

This applies specifically to manuscript collections. University records are usually restricted for 20 years unless determined otherwise by office of origin and/or University Archivist.

This is generally true, but there are occasional exceptions, particularly if the accession is recent and we have reason to believe that there may be privacy/confidentiality issues in the materials.

We don't "advertise" unprocessed or minimally processed collections, but if a research question/inquiry leads to the location of such materials, we do not, generally, restrict access unless there is some legal reason to do so.

We restrict access only when absolutely necessary either due to donor wishes or HIPAA privacy concerns or fragility.

We try to provide as much access as we can to all our collections.

While not an ideal situation, access is sometimes permitted to facilitate research that would otherwise be prevented or significantly delayed. Access is granted after a review of the relevant fonds/collection to identify particular concerns regarding access/privacy or conservation. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, with access sometimes provided only if the researcher enters into a specific agreement.

With caveats.

Yes, to minimally processed collections. (2 responses)

Yes, to minimally processed archives. Only occasionally for unprocessed collections.

No

Generally not, however university departments have access to their own material.

Only exception would be in the case of a donor wanting to review their collection.

Security concerns dictate that only processed material is available for use.

We make occasional exceptions for researchers, but generally try to avoid doing so.

DECISION MAKERS

5. Please indicate which positions in your unit/department/library have responsibility for developing processing policies, setting processing priorities, and managing processing activities for manuscript and archival materials. Check all that apply. N=75

	N	Developing Policies N=75	Setting Priorities N=75	Managing Activities N=75
Archivist	65	58	60	63
Department/Unit Head	64	59	58	44
Support staff	35	8	10	33
Librarian	30	21	25	25
Team	18	12	15	9
Other professional	17	12	12	17
Committee	7	4	3	2
Other position or entity	17	14	15	13

Please describe the other position or entity that has this responsibility. N=17

Developing processing policies N=14

Accessioning and Processing Archivist assists with establishing policies.

Assistant Archivist

Assistant Head, Preparation Section, who, like the Head of the section, reports to the Assistant Chief and Chief of the division.

Assistant University Archivist and other professional archival staff

Curator of Manuscript & Assistant Curator of Manuscripts

Curator of Manuscripts > processing archivists

Director of Archives and Research Collections and Archivist Librarian

Division Head

Library Director

Manuscripts Librarian

Media & Oral History Archivist and Electronic Records Archivist have responsibility for respective formats.

Policies related to manuscript processing are developed by the Assistant Department Chair, Manuscripts and are then ratified by the L. Tom Perry Special Collections Board of Curators before being implemented.

This is collaborative to a high degree — but “responsibility” resides largely with Head and Assistant Head.

Typically, this is the head curator or archivist.

Setting processing priorities N=15

Accessioning and Processing Archivist assists with setting processing priorities.

Assistant Head, Preparation Section, who, like the Head of the section, reports to the Assistant Chief and Chief of the division.

Curator of Manuscripts; Department Head

Curator of Manuscripts

Director of Archives and Research Collections and Archivist Librarian

Director of Libraries

Assistant University Archivist and other professional archival staff

Division Head and Technical Services Archivist

Manuscripts Librarian

Media & Oral History Archivist and Electronic Records Archivist have responsibility for respective formats.

Priorities are set by Department/Unit Head for manuscript collections and University Archivist for university records.

Processing priorities are set by the curator responsible for the collecting area that the materials fit in.

Professional archivist staffer

Typically, this is the head curator or archivist.

This is more broadly collaborative, with active participation by professional and support staff; again final decisions rest with administrative staff.

Managing processing activities N=13

Accessioning and Processing Archivist supervises student assistants in processing projects.

Active management of a specific project is assigned to a specific individual, who may coordinate the work of student assistants or volunteers.

Assistant Head, Preparation Section, who, like the Head of the section, reports to the Assistant Chief and Chief of the division.

Assistant University Archivist and other professional archival staff

Curator of Manuscripts & Assistant Curator of Manuscripts

Curator of Manuscripts > processing archivists

Curators manage the paraprofessionals, students and volunteers who do the processing.

Director of Archives and Research Collections and Archivist Librarian

Manuscripts Librarian

Media & Oral History Archivist and Electronic Records Archivist have responsibility for respective formats.

Professional archivist staffer

Support staff or an associate curator

Technical Services Archivist

6. Please list the title(s) of up to three staff (or team or committee) in this unit/department/library who have responsibility for developing processing policies, setting processing priorities, and/or managing processing activities for manuscript and archival materials. Briefly describe this position's primary area of decision-making responsibility. Then enter an estimate of the percentage of time the individual or group spends on each type of activity. N=73

Position Title and Primary Decision-making Responsibility

Position 1: Archivist Responsible for creating, implementing, reporting on, and participating in all of the above, about 30% of time. Approximately 5% of time within that 30% is given to developing policies and setting priorities.

Position 1: Assistant Archivist for Records and Collections Management Arrangement and Description and Collections Management.

Position 1: Curator of Manuscripts Solicits manuscripts donations, sets processing priority, manages workflow of processing group.

Position 1: Head Curator Collections curator.

Position 1: Archivists Contribute to setting standard policies and make specific priority decisions and manage activities within their assigned portfolios.

Position 2: Archives and Special Collections Team A newly established group, its major focus is on developing standard policies and overarching priorities.

Position 1: Assistant Curator Manuscripts and university archives.

Position 2: Assistant Archivist Diplomatic archives.

Position 1: Assistant University Archivist University records, faculty papers; and external association records.

Position 2: Archivist for Student Life and Culture University records relating to student affairs, student organization records, student papers, alumni papers, external organization records.

Position 1: Curator of Manuscripts All policies development, priority setting and activity management for manuscript collections.

Position 2: University Archivist & Records Manager All policies development, priority setting and activity management for University Archives.

Position 1: Curator of Manuscripts & University Archivist Oversight of technical services and public services.

Position 2: Processing Archivist Consults on processing level; appraisal; description.

Position 1: Department Head Developing policies and prioritizing incoming collections for processing.

Position 2: Special Collections Assistant for Processing and Technical Services Works with department head to prioritize processing and assigns collections to student assistants.

Position 1: Director and University Archivist, Cushing Memorial Library All activities of the unit.

Position 2: Coordinator of Research Services Manages staff and students in basic processing.

Position 1: Director of Archives and Research Collections The Director works with Archivist Librarian on developing processing policies, setting priorities, and managing this activity.

Position 2: Archivist Librarian The Archivist Librarian's role is focused especially on setting processing priorities and managing this process.

Position 1: Director of the SCAARB Division Mission statement, collection statement, and deciding on acceptance of large or unusual collections.

Position 2: Technical Services Archivist Cooperatively setting processing priorities with the University Archivist and managing processing projects.

Position 1: Director, University Archives Responsible for all policy aspects of the university archives.

Position 2: Operation Program Assistant (support staff) Managing workflow.

Position 1: **Head** Direction of whole archives.

Position 2: **Archivist, Access and Acquisition** Acquisition and processing of fonds.

Position 1: **Head of Special Collections** Donor Relations; Patron Services; Department Policies and Procedures.

Position 2: **Archivist** Manuscript processing including digitization projects; identifying and updating procedures.

Position 1: **Head, Department of Archives & Manuscripts** Developing policies.

Position 2: **Assistant University Archivist** Managing.

Position 1: **Head, Preparation Section, Manuscript Division** Accountable to the assistant chief and chief of the manuscript division who determine and implement overall division policies and priorities including acquisitions. The head of the preparation section develops processing policies and procedures and sets and implements processing priorities.

Position 2: **Assistant Head, Preparation Section, Manuscript Division** Accountable to the head of the preparation section; the assistant head assists in developing and setting processing procedures and priorities.

Position 1: **Head, Special Collections** Setting processing priorities.

Position 2: **Archivist, Special Collections** Managing processing activities.

Position 1: **Head, Special Collections and University Archives** Donor relations for manuscript collections, rare books, other special collections (not including University Archives).

Position 2: **University Archivist** Responsible for activities relating to university records, records management, and faculty/alumni manuscript collections.

Position 1: **Manuscripts Librarian** Developing processing policies, setting processing priorities, and/or managing processing activities for manuscript collections.

Position 2: **University Archivist** Developing processing policies, setting processing priorities, and managing processing activities for archives.

Position 1: **University Archivist** Developing policies; work with curators on priorities and managing processing activities

Position 2: **Curatorial Staff** Setting processing priorities.

Position 1: **University Archivist** Department head.

Position 2: **Staff Archivist** Managing activities.

Position 1: **Acquisitions and Processing Archivist** Processing.

Position 2: **Director of Special Collections** Acquisitions.

Position 3: **Archives Assistant** Processing.

Position 1: **Acting Director of the Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library** Setting high level priorities and goals for the Department; represents the Hargrett Library in the new Special Library building design and planning and eventual move to the new building.

Position 2: **Assistant Director of the Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library and Head of Manuscripts** Sets priorities and goals for unit; establishes procedures and best practices for manuscripts.

Position 3: **University Archivist** Sets priorities and goals for archives & records management; establish procedures and best practices for archives & records management; determine access limitations to collections based on FERPA, HIPPA or donor restrictions.

Position 1: Archivist Processing priorities, acquisitions activities.

Position 2: Associate Head, Collections and Records Management Policy and management of collections.

Position 3: Reference Archivist Processing priorities and developing.

Position 1: Archivist Input on processing policies, identification of new collections, processing of collections.

Position 2: Library Information Specialist 3 EAD finding aid encoding and collection processing.

Position 3: Director of the Center for Southwest Research Policy development, collection development, processing priorities and input on processing activities.

Position 1: Archivist for Manuscript Collections Leads development of priorities for unprocessed collection, trains interns and project staff in processing techniques, oversees interns and project staff, engages in discussions of methodological alternatives.

Position 2: Acting Director/Associate Director Participates in prioritization discussions, assists in oversight of interns and student workers, makes processing decisions with respect to specific collections, directs staff toward consideration and adoption of new standards (MPLP, DACS) and evaluates progress in these areas, edits finding aids with an eye to DACS compliance.

Position 3: Office Manager Trains and oversees student workers engaged in processing activities, selects and assigns appropriate collections to students for processing work, participates in prioritization discussions, engages in discussions of methodological alternatives.

Position 1: Assistant Department Chair Manuscripts Creates and monitors policies for processing manuscript and archival collections.

Position 2: L. Tom Perry Special Collections Board of Curators Ratifies and approves all policies related to the processing of manuscript collections; reviews processing plans for high profile collections.

Position 3: Curator Sets processing priorities and manages the processing of archival and manuscript collections.

Position 1: Curator of Manuscripts Acquisition, arrangement & description, preservation, reference, and outreach of all manuscripts.

Position 2: Assistant Curator of Manuscripts Processing and cataloging; development and maintenance of cataloging protocols; training and supervising other manuscript processors and catalogers.

Position 3: Manuscripts Cataloger (permanent, part-time position) The arrangement and description of assigned manuscript collections.

Position 1: Curator of Manuscripts For all manuscript and archival processing units: Setting priorities, developing policies, managing processing of archivist and support staff primarily through quality control and assigning work; in addition to processing related duties, responsible for collection development and donor relations and assist in overall management of Special Collections, 2nd to head of special collections.

Position 2: Library Associate University Archives For University Archives only: managing processing activities of subordinate support staff in University Archives and student assistants; setting processing priorities and policies in consultation with Curator of Manuscripts.

Position 3: Manuscripts Processing Archivist For Manuscripts only: manages processing activities of graduate assistants.

Position 1: Curator of Manuscripts Yes.

Position 2: Manuscripts Cataloger/Processing Archivist No.

Position 3: Head of Technical Services Yes.

Position 1: **Curator of Manuscripts/Unit Head** Develops policies.

Position 2: **University Archivist** Sets priorities.

Position 3: **Assistant Curator of Manuscripts** Managing activities.

Position 1: **Department Head** Developing processing policies; setting processing priorities; managing processing activities

Position 2: **Collections Archivist** Developing processing policies; setting processing priorities; managing processing activities.

Position 3: **Library Assistant IV** Managing processing activities.

Position 1: **Department Head** Setting priorities; managing processing activities.

Position 2: **Manuscripts Librarian** (2 Positions) Managing processing activities; developing processing policies; setting priorities.

Position 3: **Archivist** Managing processing activities; setting priorities.

Position 1: **Department Head** Developing processing policies.

Position 2: **Senior Archivist** Other duties.

Position 3: **Archivist** Managing processing activities.

Position 1: **Department Head and Archivist, Hawaii Congressional Papers Collection** (on leave) Developing policies.

Position 2: **University Archivist** Setting priorities.

Position 3: **Library Assistant** Managing activities.

Position 1: **Director** To oversee processing of department and working with cataloging and preservation.

Position 2: **Archivist** Determining processing priorities for unit; overseeing processing of collections by staff and students; identifying preservation and cataloging issues.

Position 3: **Library Specialist** Processing collections and overseeing work of students.

Position 1: **Director** Collection development and collection management for rare books, manuscripts, University archives, and non-book special collections.

Position 2: **Assistant Director** Collection development and collection management for rare books, manuscripts, University archives, and non-book special collections.

Position 3: **Archivist**

Position 1: **Director** Developing policies/setting priorities.

Position 2: **Supervisory Archivist** Developing policy/setting priorities/managing activities.

Position 3: **University Archivist** Developing policy/setting priorities/managing activities

Position 1: **Director of Special Collections and University Archivist** Policies, priorities, activities.

Position 2: **Associate Director of Special Collections and University Archivist** Policies, priorities, activities

Position 3: **Public Services Archivists** Policies, priorities, activities.

Position 1: **Director of the Archives** Developing policies, managing processing activities.

Position 2: **Associate Archivist** Managing processing activities, setting processing priorities.

Position 3: **Assistant Archivist** Managing processing activities, setting processing priorities.

Position 1: **Director Walter J. Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collection** Over-all direction of the department.

Position 2: **Media Archives Archivist** Preservation and processing of non-Peabody awards materials.

Position 3: **Peabody Awards Archivist** Processing and cataloging of the Peabody awards collection.

Position 1: **Director/Department Head** Setting priorities.

Position 2: **Head of Arrangement and Description** Developing processing policy.

Position 3: **Media & Oral History Archivist** Developing processing policy.

Position 1: **Head of Archival Processing and Cataloging; Curator of Transportation History Collection** Develops policies and approaches incorporating new concepts and technology; accept graduate student interns; select appropriate collections; supervise appraisal arrangement and description.

Position 2: **Director of Special Collections Library** Develops policies; manages budgets; sets priorities.

Position 3: **Team: Special Collections Curators** Assist in setting priorities.

Position 1: **Head of Archives and Special Collections** Overall administration of department including staff, strategic planning, collections, setting priorities, etc.

Position 2: **Processing and Public Services Archivist** Helps write policies, procedures, workflows for processing, helps set priorities, oversees support staff and students who process.

Position 3: **Special Projects Archivist** Processes collections, prioritizes special manuscript collections for processing.

Position 1: **Head of Collection Development and Description** Developing processing policies, setting processing priorities.

Position 2: **Manuscripts Cataloger** Developing processing policies, setting processing priorities, managing.

Position 3: **Manuscripts Processor** Developing processing policies, setting processing priorities, managing.

Position 1: **Head of Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections Unit** Policies and high-level priorities for all collecting areas.

Position 2: **University Archivist** University Archives—all aspects.

Position 3: **Manuscripts Librarian** Manuscript collections—all aspects.

Position 1: **Head of Special Collections** Developing policies, setting priorities.

Position 2: **Curator of Rare Books** Developing policies, setting priorities.

Position 3: **Library Technician** Managing activities.

Position 1: **Head of Special Collections** Provides leadership and direction for Special Collections, allocates resources to processing and has final say on policies and priorities for processing.

Position 2: **Head of Technical Services for Special Collections** Has primary responsibility for processing manuscript collections and university archives. Develops policies, sets priorities, manages processing activities.

Position 3: **University Archivist** Consults on policies and priorities for University Archives. Cooperates in managing processing activities for University Archives.

Position 1: **Head of Special Collections**

Position 2: **Librarian**

Position 3: **Support Staff**

Position 1: **Head of Special Collections** Setting priorities.

Position 2: **Manuscripts Librarian** Setting priorities, managing day-to-day processing activities.

Position 3: **Head of Public Services** Managing day-to-day public services activities.

Position 1: **Head of Special Collections** Responsible for all areas of Special Collections in consultation with other staff.

Position 2: **University Archivist** University Archives and Faculty Papers.

Position 3: **Performing Arts Curator** Performing Arts collections and audio-visual collection.

Position 1: **Head of Special Collections and Archives** Appraisal, level of processing, priority of processing, supervising archivists, and approving their strategies for all aspects of processing.

Position 2: **Archivist** Levels of processing work, developing processing plans, processing methods, minor appraisal decisions, creating policies and procedures.

Position 3: **Archival Collections Assistant** Develop projects for student assistants and supervise their work; Levels of processing work, developing processing plans, processing methods, minor appraisal decisions.

Position 1: **Head, Special Collections** Developing priorities; maintaining standards.

Position 2: **Collections Manager** Managing activities and developing processing policies.

Position 3: **Manuscript Archivist** Managing activities.

Position 1: **Head, Special Collections & University Archives** Overall responsibility; we established core policies several years ago, so current activity is largely maintenance and review.

Position 2: **Assistant Head, Special Collections & University Archives** General responsibility, particularly for shaping recommendations to head.

Position 3: **Department Manager** Identifies problem areas, blockages, etc., and (may) recommend solutions.

Position 1: **Head, Special Collections & University Archives** Appraisal, selection, description, and preservation of collections; overall management of department.

Position 2: **Special Collections Librarian** For photographs; participates in general collection access.

Position 3: **Coordinator Special Collections** For university-related collections.

Position 1: **Head, Special Collections and Archives** Policy development; processing priorities, especially for non University Archives collections.

Position 2: **University Archivist** Processing priorities, especially for University Archives collections.

Position 3: **Special Collections Librarian** Managing activities.

Position 1: **Head, Special Collections and University Archives** Has input on everything.

Position 2: **Head of Collections** Has input on everything.

Position 3: **University Archivist** Has input on everything.

Position 1: **Head, Wilson Library Special Collections Technical Services Department** Policies, priorities.

Position 2: **Manuscripts Processing Coordinator** Managing, policies, priorities.

Position 3: **University Archives Processing Coordinator** Managing, policies, priorities.

Position 1: **Interim Assistant Head of Cataloging/Head of Spencer Processing** Develop policies, set priorities, manage activities.

Position 2: **Coordinator of Manuscript Processing** Manage activities, set priorities.

Position 3: **Spencer Leadership Group** (Committee of 6 members), Develop policies.

Position 1: **Librarian and Coordinator of Manuscripts Unit** Coordinate all aspects of the Manuscripts Unit.

Position 2: **Senior Assistant Librarian** Train and manage EAD work.

Position 3: **Library Assistant** Maintain accession records.

Position 1: **Manuscripts Curator** (faculty) Collection development and processing.

Position 2: **Public Policy Archivist** (faculty) Collection development and processing.

Position 3: **AV Archivist** (professional) Processing.

Position 1: **Manuscripts Librarian** Determines which collections to process and establishes processing policies and procedures.

Position 2: **University Archivist** Assists in establishing state records retention schedule; determines which archives collections to process; establishes processing policies and procedures.

Position 3: **Accessioning and Processing Archivist** Working with the manuscripts librarian and university archivist, determines which collections to process; oversees accessioning of incoming manuscript and archival materials.

Position 1: **Processing Coordinator** Setting processing policies and coordinating processing priorities and managing processing.

Position 2: **University Archivist** Setting processing priorities and managing processing.

Position 3: **Head, Historical Collections and Labor Archives (HCLA)** Setting processing priorities and managing processing.

Position 1: **Section Head** Creates and vets policies, priorities and activities in conjunction with curatorial staff of each i&a program.

Position 2: **Curator, Archives and Modern Manuscripts Program** Creates policies, established priorities, manages processing activities of associate curator and contract staff.

Position 3: **Associate Curator Archives and Modern Manuscripts Program** Establishes new accessions rehousing priorities, manages paraprofessional rehousing technicians activities.

Position 1: **Senior Processing Archivist** Plans and coordinates processing and description projects for archival materials. Makes personnel decisions. Recommends strategies for arranging and description collections.

Position 2: **Manuscript Cataloger/Archivist** Establishes workflows and trajectory for assigned projects. Manages and trains assistants and student staff.

Position 3: **Director, Technical Services** Oversees entire technical services staff—catalogers, archivists, accessioners, etc. Establishes policy and strategic directions and participates in management of entire special collections library.

Position 1: **University Archivist** Acquisitions, reference services, public relations or outreach, arrangement and description of holdings.

Position 2: **Assistant University Archivist** Reference services, instruction, arrangement and description of holdings

Position 3: **Archival Assistant** Accessioning, acquisition of materials, reference services.

Position 1: **University Archivist** Managing processing activities.

Position 2: **Curator of Poetry Collection** Setting processing priorities.

Position 3: **Director, Music and Special Collections** Setting processing priorities.

Position 1: University Archivist Developing policies, setting priorities.

Position 2: Head, Processing Archivist Developing policies, setting priorities, managing activities.

Position 3: Processing Archivist Developing policies, setting priorities, managing activities.

Position 1: University Archivist Overall management of archival processing.

Position 2: Head, Rare Books and Special Collections Sets overall priorities.

Position 3: Chung Librarian Specialist subunit - general responsibility.

Position 1: University Archivist Collection development and policies and procedures for user services and for collection processing.

Position 2: Modern Graphic History Library Curator Collection development and policies and procedures for user services and for collection processing.

Position 3: Curator of Manuscripts Collection development and policies and procedures for user services and for collection processing.

Position 1: University Archivist Also serves as unit head. Oversees the processing of all archives and manuscripts within the library.

Position 2: Senior Library Specialist - Archives Assists the university archivist in developing policies but also sets priorities, processes, and manages the processing activities of student assistants and interns.

Position 3: Senior Library Specialist - Manuscripts Assists the university archivist in developing policies and setting priorities but also processes and manages the processing activities of student assistants.

Percentage of Time Spent on Developing Processing Policies, Setting Processing Priorities, Managing Processing Activities, and Other Duties

Position 1	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std Dev
Developing Processing Policies	68	0	33	6.9	5	6.21
Setting Processing Priorities	69	0	30	7.3	5	6.70
Managing Processing Activities	68	0	60	15.0	10	15.81
Other Duties	59	5	98	68.0	75	24.22

Position 2	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std Dev
Developing Processing Policies	66	0	35	7.1	5	7.25
Setting Processing Priorities	65	0	20	6.6	5	4.49
Managing Processing Activities	66	0	90	35.1	25	25.80
Other Duties	56	5	98	49.4	50	25.31

Position 3	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std Dev
Developing Processing Policies	42	0	20	4.7	4	4.93
Setting Processing Priorities	45	0	20	6.2	5	5.81
Managing Processing Activities	47	0	94	34.0	25	27.65
Other Duties	41	0	99	56.9	60	29.16

SETTING PROCESSING PRIORITIES

7. What factors are considered in setting priorities for the order in which to process manuscript and archival collections? Check all factors that are considered. Check up to three of those factors that are the most important in setting processing priorities. N=75

Factor	Considered N=75	3 Most Important Factors N=75
Anticipated high-use	73	60
Response to patron demand	72	44
Size of collection	68	16
Institutional priorities	67	34
Time commitment	65	15
Preservation risks	60	12
Backlog	53	4
Availability of grant funding	46	17
Processing policy	42	6
Consortial/collaborative activities	29	3
Digital format shelf life	20	—
Other factor(s)	33	16

Please describe the other factor(s) and how much weight it has in setting processing priorities.
N=32

1. Staff processing assignments to match experience and independent decision-making skills. 4 FTE processors balance work with other assignments; 3 FTE Graduate Assistant processors begin anew each year and need to be trained.
2. Privacy and access issues; access limitations agreed upon with donor. 3. Anticipated accruals, ongoing accession.
4. Reformatting issues for A/V content. 5. "High profile" gifts or purchases, especially those that affect donor or community relations. 6. Monetary value of the item or collection. 7. Significance of the collection in overall collection development profile. 8. Existence of original or meaningful order. 9. Complexity of appraisal decisions.

1) Whether we have endowments (gift funds) or one-time gifts to process collections; these funds will pay for archival supplies and student wages. 2) Donor demand for processing. These two factors have the heaviest weight.

Availability of donor funding.

Availability of non-grant resources, funding from donors and availability of interns, also appropriateness for undergraduate student workers.

Availability of staff and assistants; donor related issues (contract stipulations, donor relations); difficulty of use of collections (unprocessed or minimally processed and described).

Collection identified for offsite storage (Annex) to free up shelf space —One of the 3 most important factors.

Condition of the materials: If a collection is in extreme disarray, we may not process it as quickly because it requires more resources and more experienced staff. Availability and experience level of staff: It takes 6 months to 1 year to

train someone to process collections without too much supervision. Less experienced staff process smaller, less complex collections.

Content knowledge and abilities of available staff, including (often importantly) graduate or other assistants. Overall not the most important factor, but in some case it may be deciding: if you have the requisite skills to assign, it is efficient to get a project done now — particularly since it may otherwise be years before the peculiar combination of skills and knowledge recur.

Current or anticipated use of materials for course projects, both for research and as practical project for library and archives studies students.

Donor agreements.

Donor agreements that include processing deadlines and donor funding for processing are important considerations when setting our processing priorities.

Donor expectations are sometimes considered, if a collection is particularly important. We do try not to make promises about when a collection will be processed, but it sometimes comes up in certain donor-related situations.

Donor expectations, although not encouraged, are honored within reason. Appraisal requests and preparation is occasionally a factor.

Donor relations might influence priorities. Funding from donors would almost certainly allow us to give greater priority to these collections.

Donor requests transmitted through curators. Complexity or special needs of a particular collection meshing with available processors.

Donor's wishes.

Ease of processing/complexity of collection.

Funded collection.

Funding gifted for the purpose of processing moves an item higher in the priority list. The same team conducts processing for seven repositories so priorities are set across all the repositories using these criteria.

If donors provide funding for processing, collection may rise to the top if staff is available for the project.

In the Canadian context the most important factor that determines our processing priorities is tax receipting. Under Canadian tax law creators can make gift-in-kind donations of their papers for tax receipting, and this drives our processing, as we try to meet donor expectations to receive their receipts in a timely fashion. The donation has to be almost fully processed to enable the monetary appraisals to be carried out. Purchases are sometimes assigned a lower priority because of the need to process the gift donations relatively quickly, and the fact that inadequate staffing levels limits the amount of processing that is possible each year.

Opportunity plays an enormous role in setting priorities; for example, a manuscripts cataloger fully trained through her work on an NEH grant was kept on to catalog our remaining German-language manuscript material.

Other factor: we accept donations and accruals to be processed for appraisal in a specific tax year. Appraisers (National Archival Appraisal Board for cultural property as well as other appraisers for specific material types) come once a year; for their purposes all material must be fully processed, a finding aid available and the memorandum of agreement signed at least a month before the appraisal date. In effect, our processing priorities are determined the moment we decide to acquire something.

Other factors include intellectual value (over and above anticipated use), monetary value, agreements with donors, development opportunities, “appearance” to particular subsets of supporters, etc.

Processing for transfer to offsite storage.

Processing in preparation for monetary evaluation and the issuing of tax receipts for gifts-in-kind of private papers.

Application of provincial access and privacy legislation to university records.

Purchases are obviously always processed before donations.

RBSC: quality of material (33%).

The most important factor concerns donation, tax implications for the donor, and possible cultural property certification. Donated archives and collections receive top priority.

Topic of collection is the other important factor in processing priorities. It seems to us use by graduate students and scholars in the humanities has dropped off, and after talking to some scholars, we feel this is in part due to the perception that our collection is more 19th century focused and 20th century topics are more widespread now. Therefore, 20th century collections in certain topic areas are getting higher processing priority than say, another collection of Civil War letters. This may also fall under “anticipated high use” or “patron demand” above. Collections from the same or allied families for whom we already have processed materials are high priority, as are ones that we have committed to a specific timeline for with donors, or for which donors have given money for processing.

We developed a scoring mechanism that numerically ranks each unprocessed collection according to a variety of conditions and factors. Highest scores get processed first then we proceed down the line. New accessions are scored every few years and integrated into the stream. Will include scoring sheet as addendum. There is a second mechanism for processing collections bound for the Profiles in Science digital manuscripts program.

We occasionally receive cash gifts to fund processing when we accept a collection. This raises the priority for processing.

In order of importance, please briefly describe how the three most important factors you selected above influence processing priorities. N=71

1st most important factor:	2nd most important factor:	3rd most important factor:
Anticipated high use	Preservation risks	Size of collection
Anticipated high use	Response to patron demand	Donor's wishes
Anticipated high use - if we think there will be a lot of call for the material, the up-front investment saves us time later and saves public services time immediately since they can answer questions more efficiently.	Response to patron demand - here's where the 1% from Public Services comes in, since they can alert us to heavily used collections.	Time commitment - if it's small or easy such that we can whip through it quickly at the time of accession, we will do so.
Anticipated high use and great quality of material	Institutional priorities - usually also allows us to hire staff	Grant funding - to enable hiring of staff
Anticipated high use impacts priorities and may cause a new accession to be processed before an older accession.	Institutional priorities such as processing collections that fill collection gaps or collections that are at risk.	Preservation needs encourage quicker processing.

1st most important factor:	2nd most important factor:	3rd most important factor:
Anticipated high use results in fast, sometimes cursory processing (or slower processing if long-term need anticipated).	Grant or donor funding sometimes requires reporting of processing activity within a specified period of time.	Size of collection influences selection of a portion to process first, sometimes depending on space and time available.
Anticipated high use—equates to number of collection development elements a collection contains, historian recommendations, patron demand for similar collections.	Processing policy—equates to size, time on shelf, preservation condition, restrictions, personal papers vs archives, etc.	
Anticipated high use: we collect and process/catalog in response to the current and possible future needs of the university community.	Time commitment: how much time can the Head of Processing devote to training/supervision each term and on each collection, coupled with considering the processors and their availability.	Response to patron demand: we will respond to patron demand occasionally.
Anticipated high use	Size of accession	Processing policy
Anticipated high use. Our goal is to get collections into the hands of users as quickly and as effectively as possible.	Institutional priorities. Processing activity is focused on strategic collecting areas that support the University's research excellence (architecture, plant sciences, technology). We select for processing the collections that we expect will be most useful to our faculty and students.	Time commitment (as well as collection size). We have to consider what resources are available and what we can accomplish with the available resources. In the past year, we have also given particular priority to improving storage conditions for collections at risk.
Anticipated high-use: if we anticipate high use of a collection, then that collection will sometimes be processed ahead of other collections.	Response to patron-demand: if a donor of a collection sets a processing time-frame as a condition of the donation, then we will endeavor to meet that obligation.	Backlog: this is always a consideration.
Anticipated use, especially for those materials needed for exhibits or for other outreach purposes, strongly influences processing.	Limited number of staff available to process collections affect processing decisions.	Preservation needs for time sensitive materials strongly influence processing, rehousing and reformatting considerations.
Backlog - working to establish physical and intellectual control of every archives and manuscripts collection. Focusing on collections not processed to any level. Trying not to redo or reinterpret collections already processed.	Ease of processing/complexity of collection - Library Technical Services and student assistants perform the majority of our processing activities. Since they have limited experience in processing, we assign less complex collections for them process. They gain experience and a number of hidden collections become available quickly.	Anticipated high-use - We are here to serve our users. Therefore, we try to anticipate which collections will receive heavy use and make the processing of these collections high-priority.
Backlog because we want to make sure our resources are available to researchers.	Patron demand to be responsive to the most immediate need for access.	Anticipated high use to meet the most immediate need for access.
Donation and tax implications	Anticipated high use	Response to patron demand

1st most important factor:	2nd most important factor:	3rd most important factor:
Donor desire for tax credit often the stimulus for processing.	If we have grant for material this will give priority to a funds.	If we know the material is in demand it will be move ahead of others.
Grant funded collections have been processed.	Researcher demand	Size of collection or segments of collection - staff processing are multi-tasking and have other work.
Grant funding is sought only when a collection is high priority; the availability of that funding then makes the collection the highest priority.	Level of anticipated use is always a criterion for assigning processing priority.	Size of collection is far less a consideration than the other two.
Grant funding, when available, carries a clock. Our priorities for procuring funding are set by research potential and requests.	Collections we expect to be used more highly are prioritized more highly, all things being equal.	We occasionally — very occasionally — agree to fast track processing upon donor's request, usually because it meets other interests of ours.
High use - based on current researcher demands and gaps in available resources.	Institutional priorities - meeting the research needs of the faculty and meeting the overall goals of institution.	Size - based on available funds.
High use - support of patrons and public services staff.	Institutional priorities - support of outreach programs and in-house activities.	Grant funding - support for large or complex processing projects.
If the collection is requested by patrons, it is assigned higher priority for processing.	If the collection is very large or lacks any arrangement and will therefore be very time consuming to process, it is assigned lower priority unless there is patron demand.	If the collection is anticipated to have high use, it is assigned higher priority for processing.
If we anticipate that a collection will be popular, we try to process it first.	We process smaller collections before larger collections. Large collections require experienced staff. Due to staff turn-over, we don't have the staff with enough experience available to manage a large processing project.	If more than one patron asks to use a collection, we increase its priority ranking.
If we have multiple or extensive request to use a collection, it moves higher on the priority list.	Staff time is limited so we attempt to determine which collections will generate most interest.	Institutional records would be processed first, manuscripts from faculty and administrators second, and the remainder of the accessions.
In general, I need to find a source of funding to hire temporary employees to process collections either from the backlog or even new acquisitions if large in size.	If a collection is relatively small and contained, it is often selected for processing by interns or other temporary, part-time workers.	Part of what motivates to spend the time writing certain processing grant proposals is the ability to demonstrate that many diverse researchers want access to the materials.

1st most important factor:	2nd most important factor:	3rd most important factor:
Input from the Public Services team helps to identify patron requests for types of research materials needed. This information helps us to match unprocessed collections with broad research interests.	Patron demand for a specific collection will usually activate a fast track for processing of a collection if possible, access to unprocessed collections is available to meet most urgent patron demand, but is not the only consideration for processing priorities.	The Library and University strategic plans help guide our decisions concerning digitization of collections and response to under utilized patron and student groups.
Institutional priorities	Anticipated high-use	Size of collection
Institutional priorities	Processing policy	Availability of grant funding
Institutional priorities (outreach; where it articulates with the Columbia College core curriculum; academic focus)	Response to patron demand. Level 3 is very useful in this instance; an entire collection may not be in demand, just one or two series. In this case we can tailor our processing to those areas which are frequently used. Or if we've processing a collection with box level access only and it is used frequently, we can go back and focus on a more granular level of access.	Anticipated high use. Many afrom collections have just been received, many anticipated by researchers; the focus is to then find the means (internal or subsidized) to meet the need.
Institutional priorities and new acquisitions can redirect planned work.	Ability to match processing assignments to the processor's experience and ability to work independently.	Every effort is made to expedite processing for collections with anticipated high use.
Institutional priorities guide processing as we strive to provide collections which support curriculum and meet user need.	We try to make all collections available, even those that are not processed. As patrons request these unprocessed collections, we may reprioritize the processing importance.	Anticipated high use goes along with patron demand. We have an understanding of our users' needs and base processing priorities on the likelihood of each collections use.
Institutional priorities or strategic planning in Libraries can determine high priority items.	Collections that will be in demand can determine high priority items.	Grant or donor funding can also determine processing priority.
Institutional priorities: we respond first to the needs of our institutional patrons. They are the reason we exist.	Patron demand: we look to engage and support as many patrons as we can.	Time commitment: we have a limited staff and look for collections that allow us to meet the two factors above and still permit us to process a significant volume of material each year.
Known use of collection will expedite work on at least the targeted portion of the collection, if not in its entirety.	Closely aligned with #1 is anticipated use; if patrons have notified us of what they're interested in we will identify those materials for processing in advance of other sections of the same collection.	Grant funding for the processing (and supplies necessary) for a collection moves it to the top of the list for work.
Other factor	Institutional priorities: material that supports teaching and research at the University of Waterloo	Anticipated high use: as 2nd most important factor

1st most important factor:	2nd most important factor:	3rd most important factor:
Other factor above. Funding is the most important factor.	Patron demand. We make every effort to focus on collections that faculty or students express need to use.	Consortial/collaborative activities. These projects benefit more than one group (i.e., our library and the collaborator); they also are high profile and generate good outreach.
Other factors: donors expect tax receipt in time to file; privacy legislation has legislated time limits for approving or denying access.	Response to patron demand: special research projects (such as departmental or corporate histories may demand improved access.	Institutional priorities: special media like photographs and film are in high demand and are considered priority for digitization.
Other—topic of collection. See above	Anticipated high use—collections that I expect to receive little use, either because of the topics covered or quality of documentation of that topic—are given a lower priority. Many collections in the backlog seem to have little research value, in my opinion.	Preservation—endangered collections require more immediate steps to ensure their long term viability.
Other: donor agreements — must prioritize according to time frame communicated in writing in the donor agreement.	Preservation: prioritize objects that must be stabilized and/or reformatted to address any immediate risks to the collection, staff or potential users.	Anticipated use: prioritize on perceived demand.
Patron demand indicates processing the collection will have immediate results for access.	High use collections that are ready to be used will fulfill patron demand more quickly.	Some collections are processed due to a high-profile/or university-related creator or donor.
Patron demand is probably the most important factor in moving a collection out of the backlog and to the front of the queue for processing.	Anticipated high use is a major factor with newly-acquired collections. Resources permitting, we often process these immediately rather than adding them to the backlog.	“Institutional priorities” can mean many things—as I use it here, it is related to anticipated use. We try to identify collections in the backlog that relate directly to curriculum and programming.
Patron demand—records are deemed important to current researchers, including administratively within the organization.	Anticipated high-use—research value for historical, educational or use in outreach.	Preservation risks—the physical condition including the amount of damage or deterioration and amount of unstable materials.
Patron demand: most important; a known constituency for a collection puts it to the top of the queue.	Institutional priorities: collections that support the strengths of the extant collection as well as the goals of the institutions receive high priority.	Anticipated high-use: no point in processing if there’s no demand.
Patron demand: If we know someone’s waiting for the collection, we try to accommodate.	Anticipated high use: We work with public services and curatorial staff members on determining this.	Grant funding available: Dollars can’t be ignored, and there are usually time limits attached.
Patron demand: we choose collections for which patrons have been waiting.	High use: we choose collections that we know will be used frequently.	Institutional priorities: we choose collections needed to supplement cataloging or aid in exhibits.

1st most important factor:	2nd most important factor:	3rd most important factor:
Patron need is clearly first, and requires response on our part.	If we feel there will be use of the material, we get it processed earlier.	Lastly, if we have money dedicated to a specific project, then we do that project.
Preservation risks — because of the fragility of moving image and audio collections.	Availability of Grant Funding — if there is money we can push through work on a collection.	Response to Patron Demand — we try to accommodate our researchers.
Preservation—in order to lengthen life-span of collection and protect other collections from migrating damage.	Consortial/collaborative activities with groups/persons internally and externally—to improve access.	Institutional priorities—high profile collections that bring recognition, patrons, scholarship.
Processing policy—All new collections receive at least minimal processing within one month of legal ownership.	Anticipated high use	Collection going to offsite storage—We're desperate for shelf space so we're trying to move low use collections out asap.
Prompt responses to patrons requests for using materials if possible depending on the size of the collection, recognition of value of collection based on patron use.	Size of the collection may determine whether it can be processed quickly and easily be made available.	Recognized value of outreach efforts and illustration of collaboration between departments.
Response to patron demand by faculty for research or class use will usually push up processing priorities.	Demands by high level university administration, although rare can trump all others.	Anticipated high use pushes up the priority as a customer service issue.
Response to demand	Anticipated (or proven) high use.	Institutional priorities
Response to patron - if demand is high, it weights the decision to process.	Anticipated high use -high profile collections	Size of collection - due to limited staffing size is factored into processing decisions.
Response to patron demand	Anticipated high use	Availability of grant funding
Response to patron demand - process asap at least to minimal level, to make available to researchers.	Time commitment - level and type of available staffing influences which and extent to which collections are processed.	Preservation risks - depends on format, especially looking for items, like floppy disks, where information is most likely to be lost; or nitrate negatives where could pose fire hazard.
Response to patron demand can change individual priorities with little or no warning.	Anticipated high use reflects attempts to be proactive in determining priorities.	Institutional priorities relate to 1 and 2, as support to research and scholarship are key.
Response to patron demand indicates current research interests and demonstrates that there is a ready user for the materials.	Anticipated high use indicates that although people are not yet aware of the collection, once they are it is likely to be of great research value.	Institutional priorities such as curricular strengths or changes can indicate where we are likely to see research interest.
Response to patron demand. Enhances both the use and security of the collection if fully processed before use. Facilitates the public services staff's abilities to provide the materials to best meet the user's needs.	Preservation risks. Materials that are at risk or pose a risk to other collections must be dealt with appropriately and promptly.	Anticipated high-use. Enhances both the use and security of the collection if fully processed before use. Facilitates the public services staff's abilities to provide the materials to best meet the user's needs.

1st most important factor:	2nd most important factor:	3rd most important factor:
Response to patron demand. We try to respond to requests immediately, especially if there is a non-existent finding aid.	Backlog. A continual challenge is to keep up with our backlog and go through unappraised collections.	Institutional priorities
Response to patrons	Anticipated high demand	Institutional priorities
Serious research requests for unprocessed collections often result in processing on demand or at least, review of boxes.	Contracts stipulating a timeframe will override other priorities. On a lesser level, an initial deposit with the promise of additional materials is also a heavy factor.	Statistics and anecdotal evidence pointing to collections needing attention because of high use.
Size of collection dictates resource allocation (staff, supplies).	Grant fund availability determines processing of large manuscript collections.	Institutional priorities apply to University Archives processing activities.
Size: We are trying to deal with a large backlog. We want to see progress highlighting a number of collections, so have processed small and medium sized collections.	Anticipated high use: We review the collections for research value, anticipated use and requests.	Concurrently, we review institutional programs and research needs.
Tax receipting - see above	Anticipated high use - we try to prioritize based on the anticipated research value of a fonds or item.	Time commitment is also a pragmatic factor, as we juggle smaller collections against very large ones that require extensive processing time.
Time - we don't have much staff to devote to processing, so time is a large concern.	Size - same as above	Anticipated use - if we think something will be high use (e.g., Chancellor's papers) we will try to do more, more quickly.
Time commitment, low hanging fruit processed first, often related to size of collections.	Availability of non-grant resources, external financial support and/or availability of an appropriate intern may move a collection to the front of the line.	Institutional priorities lead to ranking a collection relatively high and may lead to institutional support.
Time commitment: we have few staff/students to process so an efficient turnaround time is essential.	Institutional priorities: collections in subject areas of special interest to our faculty or institution are high priority.	Use: any collections that would be of high interest to researchers that don't have other obstacles would also be high priority.
Time commitment: We have insufficient staff to process materials from all seven repositories.	Anticipated High Use: We do try to prioritize materials that meet instructional or research needs first.	We always respond to patron demands.
We are user-centered. We know which parts of our collection are in (or will be) in highest demand from our users.	Anticipated high use and user demand kind of go hand in hand. See above.	With an institutional priority on undergraduate learning and research, we often prioritize collections that best serve that goal over ones that don't.

1st most important factor:	2nd most important factor:	3rd most important factor:
We have a policy that all manuscript collections must be minimally processed within 30 days.	Materials that will need conservation work have to have either a minimally processed or fully processed finding aid associated with them.	We feel strongly that responding to patron demand is the most effective way to determine which series within minimally processed collections should be fully processed.
Without context, I wouldn't distinguish between levels of importance, and it's difficult to limit the most important factors to just three. A choice not offered is the influence of donors, whose willingness to give may have been predicated on the expectation of very timely processing of their material. Whether collections are restricted or closed or have government-classified security information affects their scheduling. Anticipated high use is always a factor, but a flurry of interest in a collection is certainly a trigger to process it. Size plays a role in that projects are mixed and matched according to space and staff considerations. An unmentioned factor is staffing—staff have strengths and likes according to subject and size of project that influence the timing and scope of their assignments. If a collection is at physical risk, it will of course get priority. Etc.		

8. Has your unit/department/library discussed with researchers (either formally or informally) their requirements for access to collections or which collections should be processed in the near future?
N=74

Yes	44	60%
No	30	40%

If yes, please briefly describe how these discussions affected manuscript and archival collections processing priority decisions. N=39

Anticipated use is one of the highest factors in processing priority decisions.

Consultation usually carried out when large research project is proposed such as corporate history. Not all demands can be met, but researcher is made aware of limitations on processing and access restrictions and to budget time and funds accordingly.

Discussions are generally informal, and usually done with graduate students and/or faculty. We bring an unprocessed collection to their attention, and if there's interest, we will move it up the queue.

Discussions help to focus staff upon specific needs of researchers, e.g., one researcher identified a particular series of a collection which we then processed sooner than originally planned.

Discussions with faculty help identify sources for immediate student use. E-mail reference requests may prompt preparation of preliminary container lists for mediated access.

Discussions with faculty in support of academic programs.

Discussions with researchers and academics take place before we acquire material and affect the acquisitions decision-making, not the processing. Processing is driven by the yearly appraisal deadline, after which the material is officially "open" for research.

Discussions with researchers are one of the primary ways we learn about their interests and priorities.

For a few recent collections, word had gotten around about the collections; we heard from researchers about their interest and processed the collection sooner.

Helped to set priorities.

If we know that patrons have identified a collection as being useful for research we will try to at least establish a minimal level of processing to make use easier. These discussions may also determine the level to which processing is done (series or folder).

Informal discussions with researchers who have contacted reference archivist.

Informally and very occasionally. May influence degree to which high use is anticipated, but this is not a major factor.

Informally through Research Services staff, who pass information to Technical Services. This often points to high use or problematic collections, but don't always influence policy. More formally, through finding aids usability studies which help fine tune policy with respect to processing levels.

It may change the list of priorities.

Knowledge of potential use does factor into decisions processing of collections.

Occasionally, faculty or researchers will let us know that a certain collection would be useful in their research or teaching and we either make the unprocessed collection available or bump it to the top of the priority list.

On occasion we move collections up in processing queue.

One scoring factor gives extra weight to collections recommended by staff historians. Have not asked outside patrons for advice. One historian is currently surveying professional literature and their indexing terms to assist with priorities scoring and collection development.

Public services staff informally discuss with users what success and what difficulties they have had in using our collections as well as which unprocessed collections they would be interested in using. When making processing decisions, we consider this input as part of our anticipation of what collections or parts of collections would be used if processed or better processed.

RBSC: top faculty priorities are at the top of the acquisitions and processing list as well.

Request from a government official has moved a collection from a low to a high.

Researcher will use the collection again or the researcher has noted the value of collection for additional research and scholarship by others. Discussions, along with size of collection, staff availability, lead to efforts to do processing work on a collection, particularly if it has potential institutional priority as well.

Researchers are sometimes aware of collections before they are processed. If they express an interest in using the collection for dissertation, thesis, article, or book research we try to move it forward in processing.

This happens fairly informally as researchers come to hear that we have a collection they are interested in, and want to know how long it will be before they can have access. We try to take this into account when assigning priorities.

This is related to response to patron demand. We just acquired one collection where the researcher, a UCSB professor, is publishing a book and there may be information in the collection which would influence the research. There is a tight timeline for publication so we will work immediately on the areas of the collection most relevant to her research.

This usually happens in conjunction with curatorial and/or public services staff members. We try to be as responsive as possible.

Topic of collection is the other important factor in processing priorities. It seems to us use by graduate students and scholars in the humanities has dropped off, and after talking to some scholars, we feel this is in part due to the perception that our collection is more 19th century focused and 20th century topics are more widespread now. Therefore, 20th century collections in certain topic areas are getting higher processing priority than say, another collection of Civil War letters.

User feedback has been invaluable. In one respect it's good to know that our finding aids are no longer opaque, but meeting user's needs. Having adopted MPLP with vigor, it's been enormously helpful to know that minimal description is not only accepted but warmly and enthusiastically welcomed; it not only validates our good work, but also works to prod veteran staff who were/are resistant/skeptical. The best feedback is from users who have been friends of the RBML for 20+ years. They welcome the positive changes and user-centered approach.

Usually rather general discussion with readers as to usefulness and completeness of finding aids and perceived importance of collection; this sometimes identifies related or similar materials that are less well processed — which may move them higher in priority.

We are responsive if we can free someone up.

We do this informally and look to support the research efforts of our patrons whenever we can while still attaining other departmental goals.

We have an active instruction program. As part of our planning for instruction activities we meet with faculty and ask them their class requirement but also their research interests. Through this informal discussion we are able to identify the needs of both the students and the researcher for access and processing priorities.

We have discussed especially with faculty researchers our backlogs and garnered their input. Unfortunately, our staff size does not permit much leeway.

We have worked with potential collection users to determine what types of access and processing level will be most beneficial to their use of the collection. We have enlisted volunteers who can help with identification of photographs in order to improve collection access. We consider requests from faculty, staff, students, and outside scholars when considering which collections to process next. Donations that pay for the processing of collections donated always help move a collection to the top of the list.

We listen to the researchers' comments, and try to incorporate them, along with other factors, into the decision-making process for priorities.

When an unprocessed collection has received multiple inquiries for availability, we will process it sooner and to a finer degree than other collections without known demand.

When possible, we give priority to collections when we learn from actual or potential researchers that they are needed to support their work in our collections.

When such discussions have taken place they generally focus more on the issue of what types of access points will be most useful to researchers. This does not affect priority of processing order, but does affect access point decisions and sometimes processing level.

DETERMINING LEVEL OF DESCRIPTION

9. Staff in many special collections and archives report that they process different collections at different levels of description; some process separate parts of a collection at different levels. Please indicate which levels of description have been used for manuscript and/or archival collections in your unit/department/library. Check all that apply. N=73

Folder-level	71	97%
Collection-level	63	86%
Item-level	61	84%
Series-level	60	82%
Other level	19	26%

Please describe other level of description. N=19

Accession level

Box level (7 responses)

Box level — say multiple boxes in a series or collection which, e.g., might be identified only as “correspondence a-z” versus “sub-committee reports.”

Box (container) level: used by university archives to provide some type of access when the collection is minimally processed.

Box level is below the series level but does not include folder titles.

Multi-level description: all collections are described at the fonds, series and folder levels.

Sub-collection (rare, but sometimes the best solution). Shouldn't that be file instead of folder level?

Sub-series level when series records are extensive or complex. Small group level as in photograph collections such as various events group several images.

Subgroup, sub-series, sub-sub series—intermediate levels in the hierarchy of a collection.

Subject level

Subseries level, file unit level

Summary guides and selected multi-collection subject guides to highlight repository collecting strengths.

This might be creating thematic groups of fonds.

Please comment on which different levels are used within a collection. N=66

All collections have collection level descriptions; all collections have series level descriptions if series are present in the collection; all collections use folder level descriptions as material is arranged in folders; in general, materials are described at the item level if the material is unique/one-of-a-kind. For example, a collection of papyrus fragments are described in detail at the item level. A series of correspondence in a collection of personal papers is described at the

folder level. Each collection will be described at the series level where appropriate, and every collection is described at the collection level.

All collections have to be minimally processed, which means the creation of either a collection-level record or a series-level record. Curators are then encouraged to fully process the collection at the needed level (we have specifically asked that the curators not take a sausage factory approach in which every series is processed at the same level). A fully processed collection could theoretically have one series described at the series-level, one series described at the folder-level and one described at the item level. Although it is a curatorial decision as to which level to process at, if item-level description is desired it must be approved by the Board of Curators.

All collections present differing processing needs, with a variety of factors (e.g., if it is to be digitized, its physical condition, anticipated research use) influencing processing decisions.

All parts of a collection are processed at the same level unless there are components of a collection that are at high risk for loss (electronic records) or theft (autographs), in which case these will receive more detailed processing.

All receive a collection level description; depending on whether it is full or minimal, a collection will receive subgroup, series, sub-series, etc. Description: folder level usually occurs in the container list and then, rather than listing each folder, we try to collapse a run of folders with the same label or contents when at all possible (ex: rather than listing folder 22, correspondence 1845–1847, folder 23 correspondence 1848–1850, and folder 24, correspondence 1850–1865, we list folder 22–24, correspondence 1845–1865); item level is used in conjunction with higher levels to highlight items deemed to be of significant interest, or otherwise most often with photographs.

All that makes sense for the collection or needs. Typically process to folder level but have collections processed to series, box and item level.

Archives: to be fully processed, a collection will be described to the folder/file level. RBSC: level varies with the collection.

As a moving image archive we typically need to catalog at the item level. We do use collection level cataloging and records as well, to describe for example a group of home movies.

Collections comprised of one folder are described at the collection level, as are collections of ca. 5–10 document cases that contain only one or two types of easily described material. Currently, it's rare that we describe to the item level; now and in the past it would invariably be limited to key series, such as special correspondence (although our Presidential Papers are indexed to the item level). Standard practice is to describe to the folder level.

Congressional Papers are processed at the folder level. Congressional memorabilia at the item level. Photographs often receive group-level processing. Some large collections with large, complex series demand sub-group level.

Could be any combination of levels, although we seldom process to item level except in the case of stand-alone letters, diaries, etc.

Depending on size of collection, all four levels are used with smaller collections often described to the item level. Otherwise, it is mainly folder level.

Depends on the types of materials and the importance of the collection.

Folder level.

Folder-level processing is the most common. Item level is used only for small and/or extremely valuable collections. Series-level is rarely used in recent years. Collection-level is used only for accessioning a newly received collection.

Fonds, series, and folder-level descriptions are created for each collection using the Canadian descriptive standards as

set out in RAD (Rules for Archival Description). Some further item-level indexing is done for correspondence in specific fonds.

Fonds/collection and series level are most common, with item level done mainly for nontextual materials (e.g., photos, AV, etc.) Folders are often listed but their contents are not described.

For large organizational records, the processing may go to the series and to the folder-level. For small literary collections, photographic or digital collections, the processing may go to the item level.

For larger collections, we have occasionally processed only individualized series, in order to make the collection more useable. We also do not have the time to fully process the collection as a whole.

I actually discussed this earlier with a brief recount of our tiered processing levels.

If a register and container list is being created for a modern manuscript collection, we describe at the folder level. If no register is being created, then we describe only at the collection level with a MARC record.

It depends on the importance, preservation work, media, and size. Sometimes it is a mixture.

It depends on the value of the collection.

It is quite common to identify multiple series within a collection, relatively common for series to have sub-series, but unusual to break to sub-sub-series. Series almost always occupy at least one box, and the box is in that sense the more fundamental part. Materials within boxes are foldered. If folders contain multiple items (which typically they do) it is unusual to describe them — though a Presidential letter, say, among a group of less valuable letters, might be noted: "...including a 1910 Theodore Roosevelt TLS." If judged of extreme value, such a letter might be replaced with a photocopy and the original removed to a more secure location. This level of decision-making and processing is unusual.

Item level for older individual manuscripts (pre-1800). Folder level for most other material.

Item level has been used rarely for very small or single folder collections. Most collections are processed on a folder level with series. Processing strategies have changed over the years with different staffing and leadership.

Item level is reserved for one-off items, such as important letter or autograph. Folder level is almost everything else. There are existing one-off items or small collections (manuscript box or smaller) of one format (e.g., correspondence) or topic where no finding aid is necessary.

Item-level processing is used rarely and only with collections with high research, high institutional, and high impact values. Folder-level processing is standard. Series and collection levels are used to provide information about a collection for access and promotion, most likely folder-level processing will follow based on prioritization.

Item level is used when items digitized and is required to identify digital object folder level when collection is being processed, series/box level for routine sets of records not available to general public (student records), and collection level is used as temporary level for large unprocessed materials.

Item-level or folder-level or series-level can be used within the same collection.

Level 1 (Collection level): Accession record, inventory list, preliminary inventory, processing record. Level 2 (Series level): Level 1, plus series level arrangement, box level preservation, finding aid, MARC record, EAD. Level 3 (Folder or Item level): Level 2 plus DACS "Multilevel Optimum Added Value."

Levels to be used are determined based on value (intrinsic and/or monetary), size, original order, homogeneity of material throughout the collection, and perceived use.

Levels vary greatly depending on subject, extent, monetary value, demonstrated need, and existence of supporting

documentation (especially when supplied with purchased literary manuscripts). Levels may and do vary within a collection.

Manuscripts: collection, series, subseries, etc., folder and sometimes item level. Archives: record group, subgroup, series, subseries, box or folder and sometimes item level.

Most collections are processed at folder level. Archives and other suitable collections are processed at the series level. Diaries, scrapbooks and some correspondence are processed at the item level. Backlog collections and newly received large collections are processed at the collection level.

Most of our collections are processed at the file unit level; while a single folder containing all related documents is the most common example of a filing unit, a large file spanning several folders is also considered a single filing unit. We only use item-level processing for significant media materials (photographs, audio-visual materials) or extremely rare, fragile, and significant items. However, we have processed collections at the collection level, series level, and subseries level when that level of control was all that was required for adequate access and preservation given our best guess for the projected level of use and significance of the collection.

Most processing is at folder or series level. Item level is used primarily with photographic collections, small research-significant series such as correspondence, and audiovisual items.

Nearly all collections processed are at folder level, with some at the box level where the content/format is oversized.

Often we do not go to the folder level description, if the series are all the same type of material such as financial records; they are simply listed by years.

On occasion, all levels could be used within a collection. The combinations of item and folder level or folder and series are most likely and most common.

Our baseline is folder level, but in pre-processing descriptions we typically describe at series or collection level, and for single item collections (e.g., a single account book or diary) item level is identical to collection level. In the past, our dept rarely described at item level, but we very rarely do so today.

Primarily collection level and folder level processing. Almost never conduct item level unless needed for security reasons or materials will be digitized for digital library. Folder level is quickly becoming quick and dirty inventory work, we rarely arrange anymore.

Series, sub-series, folder, item.

Small collections tend to get item-level lists. (small = less than .50 cubic foot).

Small collections, including early records (19th century volumes) and other types of records (e.g. Photographs, maps, sound and moving image material) may receive item level treatment. Larger manuscript collections and university records normally are processed at the folder, series, and collection level.

Some fonds have all 4 levels, but most do not include item level description.

Sometimes we process one portion of a collection only. We do this when one part is thought to be high-demand and another part might only have only minimal demand.

Special media — often are described at item level. File level — required for most university records acquisitions because of privacy legislation. Series and Fonds/Collection level — for all other finding aids

The approach differs based on the presumed research value of the materials, on the degree of access restrictions which may be placed on the materials, and the time available to attain production goals.

The default is folder level, but we assess the level of processing for each collection.

The folder level is the most common level in the CSWR, however within a collection we also do series descriptions.

Usually we include series information and then file-level information, but it depends on the size, complexity, and content of the collection.

We almost never go beyond the folder level. We're currently working on digitizing a complete collection with an NHPRC grant, but that is also only folder-level description.

We customarily process to folder level. In some cases, most often in photograph collections and in collections that include (or consist of) printed ephemera, we describe at the item level. For manuscript collections consisting of a single item, we ordinarily create an item-level MARC record.

We have done all four types of processing at different times and for different reasons. We are presently engaged in generating at least collection-level records for all 2000+ of our collections. Our policy for new collections is to create a collection-level description with corresponding MARC record immediately upon accession. If possible we will also do a series-level description. Folder-level processing is prioritized based on a variety of factors, and the vast majority of our inventories are done to the folder level. We rarely perform item-level processing; though some of our collections that were done years ago are item level, today it would be done only in unusual circumstances (e.g., such access is required to make the collection useful to researchers). We have no problem with different parts of a collection having different levels of description, as appropriate.

We have often described at a consistent level throughout the collection, sometime we describe at the series and box levels rather than the folder level in cases where the materials are rather undifferentiated or homogeneous.

We have processed and described the correspondence series to item level for a particular collection; other series are processed and described to the folder level for this collection.

We may use all of the levels within a given collection if warranted.

We most frequently process to the folder level. We may process at the series or collection level for collections, or parts of collections, that we expect to be infrequently used. If our assessment is wrong and the collection is used, then we can do additional processing. We very rarely process at the item level. Any level may be used for any part of a collection. Most frequently, a whole series would be described at any one level.

We no longer process at the item level with the exception of images, but it had been done in the past at this institution. Most full collection processing will go to the folder level. In recent years, we have decided to strategically process at the collection, series, or folder level as expected/known research demands indicate.

We rarely use item-level cataloging any more; folder level consists of folder titles used in the container lists.

We use all levels needed to make the materials usable.

We use all levels of description. Item level is used only for very important material.

We usually use series and folder, but in our Manuscripts unit we sometimes use series, folder, and item level.

Within a collection only one level is used.

Within a collection we process to the series level if it has high demand or probably will have high usage and is worthy of a preliminary inventory. If we process at the collection level, the materials get either a summary description or a full preliminary-inventory with folder-level control.

10. What factors are considered to determine which level of description to use for a given collection or part of a collection? Check all factors that are considered. Check up to three of those factors that are the most important in determining which level of description to use for a given collection. N=73

Factor	Considered N=73	3 Most Important Factors N=72
Size of the collection	70	38
Patron access needs	67	48
Anticipated high-use	66	39
Staffing level	59	30
Homogeneity of the collection	57	25
Preservation risks	51	8
Backlog	44	6
Processing policy	43	11
Other factor(s)	15	7

Please describe the other factor(s) and how much weight it has in determining which level of description to use for a given collection. N=14

1. Staff reference needs. 2. Existence of supporting documentation and detailed description, especially from purchased literary manuscripts. 3. Value of items within a collection. 4. Need to highlight strengths or unique items within a collection.

As above, gifts in kind requiring tax receipt are usually described in more detail to ensure accurate fair market value. File lists for university records required to comply with provincial privacy legislation.

Complexity of organization — perhaps of equal weight as homogeneity of the collection.

Digitization potential; ease of processing; arrangement — how well arranged was the collection when it came through the door?

Does the processing staff have the language ability or subject knowledge required to process a collection?

Expected privacy or security issues; condition of collection (lacks order); formats found in the collection are all important factors.

Funding from a donor, grant, or other source. Or, likelihood that collection will be scanned.

If a fonds/collection is being considered for an application for certification as Canadian cultural property a much more detailed description is required. In some cases, such as AV items, technical issues may also be considered.

If a register and container list is being created for a modern manuscript collection, we describe at the folder level. If no register is being created, then we describe only at the collection level with a MARC record. No register will be created when there is such a homogeneity to the materials that a cataloging record is sufficient description.

Other: donor agreements; format (i.e., photographs, ledgers, or particular special objects, etc.)

Restrictions (closed series) often mean no description is given.

Restrictions, either donor applied or locally applied. Need to be extra careful when known privacy issues exist. Donor restricted collections are negatively weighted until restrictions expire.

The nature of the collection is a major factor in determining what is done.

We are currently moving through medium size collections (20 boxes or more). Generally at the folder level. Larger collections would lend themselves more towards series and box level. Security — high value of collections processed to item level. Donor or grant funding may impact level of processing.

Please briefly describe the most important factors for determining each level of description. N=70

Item-level N=67

Access to non-textual material and application for cultural property certification.

Anticipated high use and/or single-folder collections.

Anticipated high-use, monetary value, patron access needs, staff available.

Archives: format — used only for photographs, audio/visual; RBSC: patron needs and the nature of the collection.

Codex manuscripts and most miscellaneous manuscripts are described at the item level, because they are not part of a larger collection.

Correspondence indexing is done for significant authors, artists, and local historical collections.

Depends on what type of collection.

Done if required, rare.

Factors checked above are constantly applied against all levels.

For individual manuscripts, particularly literary works, and early works (pre-1800).

For rare/valuable manuscripts.

Generally items acquired singly or of exceptional importance.

High information value; high artifactual value.

High research interest; photograph collections that can be described.

High research value, digitizing, format.

High value (intrinsic or monetary).

If and only if the monetary value of each item is extreme and/or patron needs warrant, and then only if the collection is small enough that we can allocate time and resources needed.

Importance and digitization.

Importance of materials and anticipated use.

Item level description presupposes uniqueness requiring that an extraordinary breadth of detail be provided to the patron.

Item level is reserved for one-off items such as important letter or autograph.

Item must have high research or market value.

Lack of order, privacy or security risks, preservation risks, formats.

Material of exceptionally high historical and research value is described at the item level.

Monetary or intrinsic value of collection; size is important but secondary.

Must be a small collection (less than .50 cubic foot).

Necessity in distinguishing individual items—at this time only done for images.

Needed for digital object.

Never done here.

Never unless digitized.

Only if material warrants item level description (e.g., diary, scrapbook).

Patron access needs, and preservation risks (especially theft).

Patron access needs. Anticipated high-use. Processing policy.

Patron access needs; size.

Patron access needs. If it is anticipated that finding aid will be accessed frequently by researchers off site, more detail is provided.

Provided only in the content of online databases (contentDM).

Rareness of material; anticipated heavy use; format; donor agreement; staffing.

Rarity or monetary value; perceived significance; mostly with photographs.

Research value, uniqueness, value.

Risk of loss of information (media, e-records) or theft (autographs) and likelihood of digitization (would increase need for item level metadata).

Security, digital library development.

Security, size of collection, anticipated use.

Significance of the collection/creator.

Significance of the item itself and the types of information it provides.

Size of collection and format of material.

Size of collection; staffing; digitization potential.

Size of the collection; type of materials—e.g., a collection of scripts, probably would want to process at item level in order to list each script.

Size, research value.

Size: only small collections would be considered for item level.

Special media.

Staff time and patron access needs.

Staffing level; very labor intensive; done for small—less than 10 items—literary manuscript collections; collections of ephemera; correspondence of significant pre-1860 historical figures.

The nature of the materials determine whether it is appropriate to describe things at the item-level. Generally item-level processing is only done for photograph collections. Item-level processing must be approved by the Board of Curators.

This would have to be a very rare or important item.

Uniqueness (or value) of items and the need or high demand for item-level access. (2 responses)

Unless it's George Washington's signature on the invoice of an axe-maker it's folder level.

Used for literary manuscripts or highly sensitive materials.

Used primarily for small collections.

User access needs.

Usually reserved for media, but even then we often describe in some grouping; small purchased collections; small collections with particularly high anticipated use.

Value of item for research (unique and/or important items); items not easily grouped into series.

Value of the individual item for research use.

We do not process anything at the item level.

We need to go item level with most everything in our collection because that is the only way to provide.

Will staff and users wish to repeatedly retrieve the object at the item level? Does the item require item-level preservation treatment?

Would almost never do unless had special funding.

Folder-level N=65

Access and privacy legislation; tax receipt.

Access for patrons and staff reference.

Access, size, and homogeneity.

Adequate to describe and for a researcher to find needed information.

Anticipated high use and patron needs would be important for this level of description. (3 responses)

Anticipated use is the important factor. The higher the anticipated use, the more thorough the description.

Archives: staff availability.

As noted above, processing policy determines that we describe collections of diverse material above a certain size to the folder level.

Collections of one format (e.g., All letters) might be processed at folder level only.

Depends on what the materials need, but we usually try to process to the file level.

Depends on what type of collection.

Discreteness; keyword searching; searching across collections; original order.

Do not want to lose information kept by researcher (records creator used folder level).

Does the folder contain unique enough content to provide an access point that distinguishes it from other folders?

Done for all.

Ease of processing; staffing; size of collection; arrangement.

Factors checked above are constantly applied against all levels.

Folder level description must suffice to provide patrons with a detailed account of the folder contents and its relation to the collection as a whole.

For collections of personal, historical, or literary papers.

For not so rare material that we anticipate would be of significant research value.

Funding; pressing needs (administrative/faculty/political priority); size.

Homogeneity of folder contents.

Ideally, the level for all collections, but not always realistic; provides more information for researchers.

If the content of each folder is homogenous, item level is not provided.

If we only provide folder level, in some ways it is seen as less than providing series and folder level because folder level only is usually when little other arrangement or description has occurred and we are using the creator's description.

Folder level in conjunction with series is seen as more of a map to a collection, assuming a good bit of discovery and the decision of relevance has occurred from reading the series (or similar grouping) descriptions.

Importance of materials and anticipated use.

Items enclosed must have a more or less natural "place" in series and over-all collection.

Maintaining original order.

Meaningful folder descriptions, heterogeneity.

Original order; literary collections.

Our default level for modern collections.

Our standard level of processing.

Our usual level.

Patron access and value of the collection content needs are usually the most important factor in determining the processing level.

Patron access needs and homogeneity of the collection.

Patron access needs based on size of collection; since most of our large collections are stored off-site, they all have container lists; more detailed folder-level descriptions are done for historically significant correspondents; titles of writings for literary manuscripts.

Patron access needs, homogeneity of the collection. (2 responses)

Patron access needs, processing policy.

Patron accessibility to materials (ease of use); this level provides good information for large collections.

Potential usefulness of information and ease of retrieval of specific information identified as important by us or by potential users.

Provides basic access to collections and provides basic level of details to assist the researcher using the materials.

Research value, staff time to process.

Significance and relevance to collection to provide context and or organizational structure to assist in use.

Significance of collection and availability of resources.

Significance of the office, program, administrator, or faculty member.

Size of collection, arrangement.

Size of series and uniqueness of individual folder contents, research significance.

Small to medium size collections.

Staff time and patron access needs.

Staffing level.

Staffing, access needs, size of collection, homogeneity.

Standard approach for most processing. (2 responses)

Standard for average sized collections (1 to 30 cubic feet).

The general standard for us.

The majority of our manuscript collections are described at the folder level in a container list.

The nature of the materials and the need to create identifiable titles for each folder drive decisions at this level.

This is our goal for all of our collections.

This is our most typical level of description for processed collections. However, if series contain mostly the same type of folder content, it may not be required.

Used collections over .42 linear feet.

Used for general office records, usually archives from university offices.

We try to do this for most collections, unless they're extremely large.

Series-level N=59

Acceptable only when a series is truly homogenous in a way that makes more detailed description unnecessary or irrelevant.

All collections get this level of description; we might stop at this lever where we don't anticipate high use.

Anticipated research use. (2 responses)

Archives: staff availability.

Can't think of a collection that fits this description.

Complexity of collection and/or creating agency.

Complexity of the accession and degree of original order.

Corporate collections; homogeneous records; very large collections.

Currently, considering especially as we move through large collections.

Depends on what type of collection.

Don't have time to do folder level, intellectual short cut.

Factors checked above are constantly applied against all levels.

Folder/box contents have a clearly describable relationship to each other.

Homogeneity of material in series, anticipated use and research significance.

Homogeneity of the series.

Homogeneity; individual importance of items is generally less important than the significance of the series as a whole.

Homogeneous content and/or pre-arranged folders.

Identification of the genre types, formats, or subjects included as a rationale for level of processing (i.e., correspondence has greater potential than newspaper clippings, but both are integral portions of collection).

If a collection has series, either originally or that we have created in arrangement; most fully processed collections will have series level; "naturally occurring" series in minimally processed collections will receive description.

If a collection is large, we would likely need to/want to include series.

If series are small or homogeneous, then series-level description may be adequate.

If the collection is continuously added to, e.g., university department, patron access needs.

If the collection is university records, series level is the norm.

If the materials can be understood as an aggregate whole at the series-level and researchers will be able to get in the right neighborhood for their research, then we describe at the series-level. Most minimally processed collections are series-level.

Importance of materials and anticipated use.

Is the material uniform enough or small enough so that a series scope and content summary represents it adequately?

It is rare for us to use this level and would probably only be used for very large or unprocessed collections.

Maintaining original order.

Often done for.

Other collections with varieties of format or function are identified for series level processing.

Only used in very rare collections when material is homogenous.

Optimal level for many collections, particularly for University Archives.

Organize materials into an architectural format and structure for apprehending materials.

Our default Level is 2: series-level description.

Patron access needs. (5 responses)

Priority/value of the collection.

Processing policy.

Provides overview information on collection and may highlight value of one series over another.

Research value, staff time to process.

Series level description must suffice to provide patrons with a detailed account of the series content and its relation to the collection as a whole.

Size and homogeneity.

Size of collection. (2 responses)

Size of collection; staffing levels.

Size of fonds/collection and need to support patron access.

Size, research value.

Staff time and patron access needs.

Staffing, access needs, size.

The size of the collection and the content value are the two main factors in determining a series-level description.

Used as a pre-processing level for materials considered as very low use or for extremely small collections.

Used for large-volume Congressional office records.

Used for very large collections.

Usually create at least rough series.

Usually only with larger collections.

Collection-level N=54

A temporary description, used to alert researchers to existence of the collection.

All collections get this level of description; it would be rare not to go beyond this level.

All collections receive collection level description; small (~100 items or fewer) and/or uniform collections most likely to only receive a collection level description.

All our collections get MARC records and Web site listing to send to storage.

Always—collection level in both EAD-encoded finding aids and at least collection level for corresponding MARC records.

Archives: staff availability.

Awareness/publicity that the collection is available for research even though access may be inhibited by lack of organization.

Backlog, staffing level, preservation risks.

Basic inventory.

Collection level description must suffice to provide patrons with a detailed description of the collection as a whole.

Collection of low anticipated use/demand may initially receive this level of description, with the idea that description could be expanded upon at a later date if the materials are requested.

Collection size (small) or homogeneity.

Collections consisting of one folder or of less than ca. 10 boxes of homogenous material are described at this level.

Done at accessioning.

Done for all.

Essential to the most limited access; every attempt is made to create at least a rudimentary collection-level description on accession.

Expected patron use.

Factors checked above are constantly applied against all levels.

Generally, a stopgap description only, made available only until the collection has been properly described. A few collections will remain more or less permanently at the collection level, usually because they are not of sufficient research value to warrant greater investment.

Give researchers a brief but comprehensive view of what the collection contains and does not contain.

Homogeneity of collection.

If a collection is small and homogeneous or of low research value, then we might describe at the collection level. A collection-level description might be an initial, temporary description to let potential users know that we have the collection. If we receive inquiries, we could then do additional processing.

If no register needs to be created, then there will only be a collection-level cataloging record. Usually, the collection is small and contains only one or two series.

If the collection is small and the materials can be understood at an aggregate level without compromising access, then we describe at the collection-level. Some minimally processed collections are done at the collection-level.

If we can provide some access with a collection level record we do that. Most often with collections that are homogeneous in nature.

Immediacy of access.

Importance of materials and anticipated use.

Initial processing beyond accessioning and until full processing is possible.

Integration with library systems.

Is the collection small enough or potential demand for a collection so low that a catalog record represents the collection adequately?

Low use or low research significance. Also almost all new accessions get collection-level catalog record and/or preliminary finding aid.

Might be used temporarily for large collections, or for collections that are uniform throughout (ledgers, etc.)

Most often an accession record for unprocessed collection or a small collection or single item described only with a MARC record.

Need to address backlog.

Not processed or minimally processed, materials may be weeded or discarded in future.

Older collections in the backlog awaiting their turn at Level 2.

Patron access needs, processing policy.

Processing policy. (2 responses)

Researchers are aware that the collection exists.

Size of collection; homogeneity.

Size of collection; staffing levels.

Size of the collection. (2 responses)

Small collections (= or < 1 linear foot).

Staff time and patron access needs. (2 responses)

Staff time to process.

Staffing, access needs, size.

Summary descriptions are the default description unless the collection possesses characteristics that would justify deeper processing.

There are existing one-off items or small collections (manuscript box or smaller) of one format (e.g., correspondence) or topic where no finding aid is necessary.

Used for accessioning and unprocessed materials.

Used for large collections that have container lists; used to make large collections with high user demand available.

Used for unprocessed collections.

Other level N=12

Accession level.

Box level — for minimally processed materials with good organization.

Box level — most frequently when developing an accessions list.

Box level, initial physical and intellectual control, also materials may be weeded or discarded in future.

Box listing: for when we want to establish some intellectual control over a collection.

Box-level — size of collection; staffing; arrangement; homogeneity.

National descriptive standard RAD.

Need for instruction, outreach, collecting profile.

Some complex collections or agencies with complex structures require sub-series level processing.

Staffing, access needs, size, homogeneity.

Sub-collection: Rare, but available when needed.

Web site lists.

Please describe how you determine the minimal level of description a researcher needs in order to use manuscript and archival collections. N=62

A MARC record and box list is required to send our collections to the University of California Northern Regional Library Facility (off-site storage) so this is a required minimal record to be able to store the majority of our MSS/archives collections.

Ability to group similar items intellectually within collections.

Again, there are a host of other factors that influence the level of description from demands of donors and administrators to interest in appealing to a particular community (of users, donors, associates, etc.), to desire to facilitate research, to the likelihood of current or future digital projects.

All acquisitions of university and private records described first at accession level.

All fonds and collections receive a fonds or collection level description. We determine the level of description on each case taking into account many factors.

Anticipated user demands/usage of content based on what types of things are typically sought by our researchers.

Based on past use of similar collections coupled with the realities of lack of staff and time, we try to describe our collections well enough so that they are "found" and accessible to researchers.

By policy we demand that every accession gets at least an accession record, listed on new accession Web page each year, briefly cataloged (mostly for delineating collections stored offsite), and box listed after rehousing. We believe rehousing at the folder level is the most important access and preservation activity we can supply outside of good environmental controls.

Can the researcher use our description to get to within 1 to 2 linear feet of the desired material? If a researcher flies across the country to use our materials based on our description, will he or she be upset that we have mislead him or her about the scope and content of our collection? We try to provide the minimum amount of description necessary to help a user reasonably identify whether a box, series, or collection is likely to contain the information he or she is seeking. The minimum amount fluctuates based on the expected type of demand for the collection and the nature of the materials.

Collections with anticipated high-use and/or complex arrangement receive more detailed description; Low-use and easily accessible original order allow for less detailed description. Other factors include security and preservation for

specific items, and the presence of different types of materials, such as photographs, digital storage media, or multiple drafts works.

Combination of past/ongoing discussions with researchers, often relating to format, subject matter; keywords, and descriptive information that would yield useful results by a search engine; accrued experience of the processor in question.

Curators determine processing level (i.e., Levels 1–3) prior to routing to processing.

Descriptions grow and develop over time and as collections are used, however, at a minimum a description must provide a researcher with a basic understanding of the contents, context, formats, and date span of materials comprising a collection or a portion of a collection. Enough for them to identify that it might be of interest and pertinent to their research. What is difficult to factor in is the interpretive skills of the researcher—the more advanced researcher can judge usefulness with less specifics than a beginner. So type of audience and availability of staff assistance have a role in this decision as well.

Does a collection contain MIT administrative records (personal papers often have these hidden in collection); do we have a gift agreement? Dates if possible.

Evaluate the “Scope and Content” of the source material at all levels and determine appropriate description level for collection management (housing) and retrieval (access).

Folder level is the goal for the majority of our collections. Item level is rare and limited to valuable, small collections of special importance. New accessions are given enough description so that collection content can be considered when allocating resources for processing or assisting patrons with research/reference.

Folder-level or box-level inventory.

For the time being, there is no minimal level standard that I use. Either a manuscript or a manuscript collection is fully processed or it is not. Patrons make arrangements with either the Curator of Manuscripts or the Assistant Curator of Manuscripts to gain access to unprocessed material.

If a collection is largely homogeneous, we limit ourselves to a collection level description with folder level container lists. More complex collections require series descriptions as well.

If the records are the administrative products of a specific program or particular office, they are left at the default level, summary descriptions. This default level of description remains untouched unless we find other reasons to increase the complexity or granularity of processing, heavy use, etc.

Importance of collection and anticipated use influence processing decisions.

Individual assessment by responsible archivist.

It is first based on the contents of the collection, then importance.

It is really a foolish enterprise to think we can understand researcher needs or that we can match their needs with processing practices, other than in the broadest way, so we do not believe such “determination” is worth the time.

It’s mostly based on a guess at use and how much staff time we have available.

Minimal level of description will be able to provide a patron with an accurate account of holdings in a brief but succinct manner.

Off site: For collections other than university records, the researcher usually needs to know to the item level in order to request selected items. Folder or series level should provide enough information to base a decision to travel to

collection. On site: While item level might be preferred, folder level provides enough information to base request for relevant boxes.

Organization of the collection as it comes in the door, and whether item level would enhance access and be worth it.

One archivist imagines how he would locate materials in a collection, creating a pathway to the resources that is clear to him. The nature of congressional papers suggests folder-level processing while congressional memorabilia require item-level. In general, staff use their experience assisting researchers using particular collections to make such decisions, keeping in mind that some researchers prefer to explore entire boxes.

Our goal is to provide a folder level description for completely processed collections; however, if a collection contains a large volume of similar materials (i.e., correspondence) a box level may be used; if special objects, ledgers, or rare materials, etc., are part of the collection or a donor has requested it, an item level may be used.

Our minimal level of description includes a collection description and container list at the folder level.

Processing level is guided by the organization of the material, format and size of the collections.

Processing policy.

Provide basic information such as bio note, scope and content note, and date range.

Researcher needs to be able to identify material of interest, at least to the box level, so that irrelevant material is not retrieved.

Series and/or collection level, complete with a container list and perhaps an AMC record.

Series level seems to meet the needs of most researchers, particularly the experienced.

Size and diversity of material, or the lack of it, dictate the applicability of minimal description.

The basic level would be the accessioning of the collection that included an inventory at the box level.

The experience of the processor in the subject area will determine the extent of the description.

The functional ideal is to get researchers within 5–10 boxes of material they are seeking, though on a case-by-case basis and depending on the type of material. Aim for achieving a kind of “sympathetic imagination” which will help guide user to material.

The majority of time we process to the folder level. Only in cases where a collection is small or very valuable would we process to the item level.

The minimal level of description is based on privacy, security, and preservation risk factors; library policy; and formats found in collection.

The minimum level for moving image and audio collections is a title or a created title, year of creation, and subject headings or a sentence describing the content.

The primary factor is size and uniformity—what is the lowest level at which we can convey the contents and the size allows a reasonable expectation that the researcher will be able to locate a specific item or group of materials without further guidance or description. Feedback from patrons or reference staff that existing description for a processed collection is insufficient.

The researcher needs to know about the existence of the materials.

The size and content of the collection as well as its current/future anticipated use drives the minimal level.

There needs to be enough information for a researcher to determine whether or not they should take a look at the materials in the collection. We want to provide enough keyword terms in the descriptions as well as appropriate subject tracings to help the researcher decide whether or not it is worthwhile to look at the materials. We don't aim to do the research for the researcher.

They can use them with relatively minimal descriptions, size of collection and its variety in terms of formats, time span and subject matter covers all matter in determining whether they will need more description in order to use the collection effectively. It's a judgment call based in part on experience of researchers and reference archivists.

This decision is based on the contents of the collection. The more homogeneous the collection is, the more likely we are to work at series level. We also consider whether there are significant materials that need to be highlighted at an item level. Finally, we consider the likely users and how we anticipate that they might use the collection.

This is, of course, an art rather than a science. We have to make our best guess based on our own research experience, our observation of researchers, and our knowledge of our collections. We also have to consider the resources we have available and whether it is more important to provide some level of access to all of our collections or a more detailed level of access to only a few collections.

Usually the content of the collection is the main factor in determining the processing level for researcher discoverability. We have looked at the size of the collection and its content in determining the minimal level of description.

We apply the factors checked above.

We base our choices on the experience and comments of previous researchers.

We base this on professional judgment based on our experiences in working with researchers and collections, and it is becoming a more and more important consideration in our description decisions.

We describe routinely at three levels: fonds, series, folder. Our primary users are graduate and undergraduate students whose research must be done in a limited time period; we provide detailed finding aids to assist them to pinpoint material of interest and eliminate material from consideration.

We evaluate each collection based on past experience combined with whatever institutional decisions may affect the materials and our own professional judgment. However, we are responsive to feedback on user needs from our public services and curatorial staffs and will reprocess to meet these needs.

We evaluate how many resources it will take to arrange and describe at a certain level; at the same time we ask what is the potential research value to our primary users, or how important is the collection in documenting university history and culture.

We generally use our collective wisdom and experience balanced against available resources and perceived usefulness. We then try to refine this by observing how a collection is used and by asking readers what they find useful, what recommendation they have for better exposing content, soliciting comments on and corrections to finding aids, etc.

We provide a minimal collection-level description based on DACS minimum requirements; beyond that, it's a combination of instinct and educated guess. I'm not sure there are "rules" that can usefully be applied to answer this question.

We review the collection and know how our users would likely need to have the collection described.

We try to put ourselves in the researcher's position.

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE ACCESS ON PROCESSING DECISIONS

11. Please briefly describe how providing online access to manuscript and archival collections has affected decisions about processing these materials, including decisions about the level of processing, how materials are arranged and described, at what point in processing you decide to use online access methods, etc. N=69

Impact of marking up finding aids in EAD N=66

Adherence to professional standard, finding aids contain standardized fields of information, searchability, XML based preservation of information on collections.

All collections are marked up in EAD. It forms the base for all final finding aid products and cataloging. It is an integrated part of processing so has no specific bearing on processing.

All new fully processed collections are in EAD.

All processed finding aids are marked up in EAD to create searchable records. This often drives a deeper description, with more descriptive scope and content notes and folder headings.

At this time, there is little impact as EAD is handled by our digital library department.

Because of the expense of doing the markup, we are more rigorous in our analysis of the level of processing.

Considerable.

Created uniformity in processing collections (i.e., Series) and in writing finding aids.

Does not impact processing decisions; it's simply a different way of doing what we did before.

Done for all fonds.

EAD markup has helped us to keep our finding aids in compliance with international standards, and helped to make sure that the information that a researcher needs is found within the finding aid. We have continued to revise our finding aid manual to ensure compliance with the content required by EAD and DACS. We are now authoring our smaller finding aids directly into EAD. Standards of arrangement and description have not been affected, except in minor ways.

EAD markup has slowed production of finding aids and somewhat altered their visual presentation.

Greater dissemination; require clear arrangement and description so as not to confuse reference staff and/or users.

Has allowed us to create much more basic OCLC records that link to the EAD.

Has made us more aware of the shortcomings of some finding aids, has helped us to standardize finding aids, within our institution as well as with respect to other institutions in the statewide resource to which we contribute.

Has serious staffing implications. Constant turn over requires training resources.

I'm unclear what you are asking: mark up is a means to an end and ensues from a processing decision, not vice versa.

Increases overall processing time. A number of minimally processed collections have not yet been marked up.

Little or no impact on processing decisions.

Making them accessible online and changing the way in which finding aids are created and produced.

Marking finding aids up in EAD and making finding aids available online has impressed on us the need for improved descriptive practices. It has led directly to our implementation of DACS. Finding aids are marked up in EAD as part of the creation of descriptions.

Marking up finding aids in EAD does not impact how we process. (5 responses)

Marking up finding aids in EAD is only used in the most exceptional cases, and normally only when we either have special funding or when we are going to be digitizing material that needs to be linked to the finding aid. Otherwise, EAD is just short of a criminal waste of time.

Nearly all of our complete finding aids have been marked up in EAD (these generally include standard front matter plus a container list). Our “small” collections, which generally are described only by a MARC record (but often an item-level one) have not been marked up in EAD, and are accessible only through our library catalog.

No impact yet; we are in the process of trying to routinize EAD encoding through the use of Archivists’ Toolkit and a site created by the computing department of the library.

Not much because it’s just a different format for our finding aids. Doesn’t really affect our processing decisions all that much.

Now collect/write more descriptive information and make it available to researcher—conditions of use, conditions of access; most finding aids are built gradually as information is gathered about unprocessed collections, or parts of a collection are processed.

Online access with minimal finding aids still provides higher level of access than paper-based finding aids of more detail. Internal and national uniformity of description provides greater collocation of archival materials with related materials locally and globally.

Our goal is to work toward federated searching within/across institutions using common and “controlled” language. As this is still in our future we expect it to assist us in finding commonalities across similar collections.

Our highest current priority is to prepare core records for previously undescribed resources, though we are preparing EAD-encoded finding aids, if to a lesser extent. EAD-encoded finding aids are somewhat labor intensive and our effort is to prepare core records and display them for searching in a Special Collections database.

Our pre-EAD finding aids were pretty close to post-EAD, so we didn’t have to make many changes directly related to EAD encoding. Conceptually, we make EAD encoding reflect our decisions rather than decide based on EAD encoding. We haven’t had any real problems with this; seems always to be a way.

Part of the processing workflow.

Pilot project encoding Special Collections finding aids using OhioLink EAD template running 2008–2011; impact assessed upon completion.

Producing an EAD finding aid for the Web has long been one of the primary goals of our processing operation. EAD has been integrated for so long into our processing operations that there is no one on our staff anymore who can describe what processing was like before EAD.

Providing online access to manuscript and archival collections has not affected decisions about processing, including decisions about the level of processing.

Required training for personnel before can this can be put into action.

Soon to be implemented here.

The impact of having an EAD record for the collection is high.

The main effect of EAD has been to make us more conscious of consistency when creating collection descriptions of any level. We have also been able to separate the physical arrangement from the intellectual, which I think makes our finding aids easier for the researcher to use. It may also slightly simplify processing, since we don't have to worry about where items will fall physically in the arrangement. Other than that, EAD has had very little effect on our processing — we make decisions about priorities, arrangement, etc., just as we always did.

The use of the Web and EADs to make finding aids available required that we re-examine processing policies and workflows. This led to a broader utilization of graduate students and paraprofessional staff to process collections.

There has been a steep "learning curve" in training varied staff and building the technical infrastructure to deliver EAD records. At the same time, using EAD has advanced library-wide plans to exploit core metadata for use in the OPAC, a digital content management system, and linking to digital objects.

This allows us to post the finding aids online so that they are more accessible. It is easy for the research room to use these as well as patrons in house or off site.

Use of EAD has forced greater consistency in processing practices. I'm unaware of any limitations that have been imposed.

We adjusted some processing policies to conform to EAD structure and online searching.

We are in the process of doing this now. It's going to allow both staff and users to use our finding aids more efficiently. It will be of great benefit in cataloging (we pull front matter from MARC records—now we're working on the reverse). And, quite frankly, it puts us on an equal footing with our professional peers. This can never be underestimated.

We do not currently use EAD, but are considering using either Archon or the Archivists' Toolkit.

We do not use EAD. (6 responses)

We have become more aware of the need to describe contents in more detail, using more keywords and proper names.

We have minimal processing standards that enable collection level EAD encoding.

We have not done this in depth, though it is being explored at the moment. We have essentially all legacy finding aids, lists, and catalogs converted to online html documents on one of two formats. Whether or not we EAD code, we would like to move the html "parts" to a database structure, so we can separate "content" from a "delivery wrapper" and not be tied to a format.

We have used EAD only for collections already processed to the item level.

We have witnessed an increase in reference since placing EAD finding aids on the Web and that has assisted in decision making on processing priorities.

We mainly use EAD to allow for our finding aids to be shared/harvested by databases like Archive Grid. But because the hierarchical description is more complex and time consuming with EAD we do not describe things with as much detail as we did for PDFs or Word documents.

We only use EAD for ARCHEION.

We've actually done little of this and need to do far more. What we have done and what we have looked at to do has shown us that many of our paper finding aids are not in great shape and need to be looked at.

When we make processing decisions, this is not important in our decision making.

With the help of grant funding, we hope to soon add the creation of EAD finding aids to routine processing work. Haven't done this yet. This has been enabled by our consortium's EAD finding aid creation tools.

Impact of hosting finding aids on the Web N=62

All collections processed have both print and online finding aids resulting in increased researcher interest.

All finding aids are made accessible on the Web. In processing we take into consideration the fact that Web access facilitates keyword searching which benefits from rich folder description.

All newly processed collections are on OAC. High priority.

All of our finding aids are placed on the Web, and such Web posting is a minimal requirement to consider a series processed. If it is processed, it has a series-level description, and often a folder title level finding aid on the Web.

All written finding aids are destined for online presentation, which results in uniformity of finding aids.

As an institutional archives, many of our collections are restricted to use by officers of the institution. Finding aids to heavily restricted materials are not posted to the Web. All others are posted. This does not affect processing decisions.

As the host for the Rocky Mountain Online Archives, we are able to see collections from other institutions that relate to our holdings and direct researchers to these related collections.

Considerable.

Creates more standardization.

Encourages minimal processing to provide at least collection-level access.

Enormously expanded use by a far more diverse public: we rarely put a finding aid online without receiving some request for use within a week or two.

Exposed collections to international audience, methods of outreach and promotion.

Exposure of finding aids on the Web has created increased work for public service staff responding to remote inquiries.

Facilitates the use and discovery of collections heretofore available only on site. Increase use of collections.

For online searchability, we probably pay more attention to uniformity of language used in description, but we've always kind of done this.

Greatly increased our number of electronic requests — currently 200–250 per month. We are focused on providing online access to all of our collections at the minimal level.

Has made us more aware of needing to standardize how we process collections and describe them.

Has made us more aware of the shortcomings of some of our finding aids, they are more visible; has made us less worried about physical arrangements since we can more easily associate materials electronically and "describe our way out."

Helped us to determine which collections are most used and impacts what we process.

Hosting finding aids on the Web does not change priorities for processing or the level of description. (2 responses)

Hosting finding aids on the Web has affected decisions about processing, including decisions about the level of processing only to the extent that for many collections there needs to be enough detail in the finding aid to 1) inform a

potential researcher of the precise content of a collection; 2) aid the researcher in requesting specific items; and 3) aid staff in the identification of requested items and in the management of reproduction rights.

I cannot think of any processing decisions that have been influenced by our provision of online access.

I don't really think this affects processing priorities unless we receive additions to a collection already described online.

Increased donor demand to find their collections via Google. One factor for recent policy to catalog accessions as end-of-year activity. During my tenure we've always published truncated accession records to the Web twice a year.

Increased specificity of reference inquiries. Increased publicity, and therefore use by spectrum of researchers, of materials available.

Increased visibility and use of collections.

Influenced our decision to adopt DACS. Finding aids are placed online after being tagged in EAD.

Key-word searching has to a degree allowed us greater freedom in leaving collections described at the summary description level as long as proper key words and names are included in the finding aid or the metadata fields.

Migrating collection descriptions from paper to HTML has been the single most important factor in increasing visibility and use of our collections. At our institution, HTML finding aids came first, and then EAD versions in a union database.

More access.

Mounting finding aids on the Web results in a greater volume of e-mail reference queries, many of them in the "nuisance" category.

Nil.

No change in processing levels or details of description. Some adjustments in keying in needed data.

No impact on decisions as we go forward. In some units we'll need to prioritize the order in which we convert old paper finding aids to Web based.

No significant impact on processing decisions.

Obviously the more we put up, the more people want, so that creates pressure to do more.

Our finding aids are on a consortial site, which is great for access, keeping Kentucky-related materials together, and outreach. The pages are not currently crawled by Google which severely reduces the possibility of discovery.

Part of the processing workflow—has provided more immediate feedback from researchers and donors, especially with corrections and increase in use of materials.

Pilot project encoding Special Collections finding aids using OhioLink EAD template running 2008–2011; impact assessed upon completion.

Protecting privacy by not revealing certain information in the finding aid. Reformatting of folder headings so that each can be separately interpreted when it stands alone in a search hit list or other display separated from the surrounding headings.

Providing access to finding aids for partially processed fonds/collections has resulted in increased demand for access to the unprocessed components.

Put it up and they will come. Doesn't matter if it's a scan of a finding aid written in 1970 or the most high-tech digital component—if no one knows you have it, then why do you?

RBSC: all fonds have online access to finding aids. This requires a higher standard of finding aids as well.

See above. Has allowed us to create much more basic OCLC records that link to the EAD.

See above. I'm unclear what you are asking: mark up is a means to an end and ensues from a processing decision, not vice versa.

See above. We have become more aware of the need to describe contents in more detail, using more keywords and proper names.

Since 1995, the impact has been enormous, making online finding aids the chief access tool for manuscript collections. World-wide reference requests reflect usefulness of specificity of information at the folder and item level.

The use of the Web and EADs to make finding aids available required that we re-examine processing policies and workflows. This led to a broader utilization of graduate students and paraprofessional staff to process collections. Patrons are able to find our collections on the Web.

This has become a requirement for archives today if they want to meet researchers "where they are," i.e., online and for their collection to be located and used. If a researcher finds a collection online and requests it, the collection is bumped up in terms of processing priority.

We are moving toward eliminating paper finding aids, which reduces our costs. Reference is more efficient when patrons bring in call #s, Box and Folder #s or finding aids.

We are not hosting as yet. See TARO.

We do host finding aids online and have found them very helpful for our researchers. Whenever we can put an inventory list online we do.

We do this all the time. This is expected of us. The size of the finding aid and level of description do not hinder us from posting finding aids on the Web.

We expect greater scrutiny of our online finding aids, and are also aware that users' ability to word search within a finding aid offers additional means of access not dependent on browse order. We also make sure that researchers are directed to consult with reference staff within the finding aid itself, as many come directly to the finding aid through a Web search rather than through the Library's Web site. Our processing decisions have not been appreciably affected, however. Regarding the timing of online access to information about the division's material, a minimal-level catalog record of newly received collections is created at the time of accessioning and made available in the OPAC; information about additions to an existing collection, processed, unprocessed, or partially processed, is incorporated in the catalog record of that collection at the time of accessioning.

We have descriptive information about collections on our Web site, but finding aids generally appear in Online Archive of California. Anything on the Web site greatly enhances its visibility and use.

We have some finding aids on the Web, but only because they were fully processed in the past and we receive funds to send them out for EAD-encoding.

We mount our finding aids as PDF files linked to collection level MARC records in the OPAC. The visibility of our finding aids has resulted in a marked increase in use, and in reference queries. We converted legacy finding aids to PDF to enhance access, even if they do not fully comply with current processing guidelines.

We try to create description that is useful in a searchable environment and viewable on the screen. We emphasize names and subjects useful in keyword searches; we eliminate repetitive description that might cause a user to scroll too much. We describe materials for the Web, so we consciously create description with the availability and searchability of

this information on the Web in mind.

When we post materials on the Web, researchers find them and generate research queries, particularly via e-mail.

While putting finding aids on the Web increases user demand, there is generally little impact on decisions regarding processing, level, arrangement, and description other than demand being an incentive to make almost all finding aids available online. Some researchers, seeing the online finding aid, expect the materials to be digitized as well.

With minimal processing, we've gone with the idea that some info is better than none and having any information on the Web will enhance access. Finding aids for full, minimally, or preliminarily processed collections are posted. Ability to keyword search has probably made it easier to accept minimal processing as adequate for a collection ever to receive. Also has affected cataloging records since we don't have to try to jam as much as we can into a MARC record any more for it to be findable online.

Impact of using Web 2.0 applications and social software, such as Facebook, Flickr, tagging, etc. N=50

2.0 tech has contributed very little of value to our collection descriptions, even though we employ these technologies as vehicles.

Blog and wiki presence established in 2009; impact to be reported in 2010.

Currently investigating use of these options for outreach and promotion, access to materials, way to engage patrons and researchers in descriptive processes.

Do not currently use Web 2.0 applications.

Don't use at present. (7 responses)

General interest comments have come via Flickr. Facebook was implemented in February 2009. The "share" button to allow researchers to bookmark or e-mail a source are expected to be implemented during mid-2009.

Has no effect. (10 responses)

I cannot think of any processing decisions that have been influenced by our (admittedly very minimal!) use of Web 2.0 applications.

Increased our connections with users; the use of Flickr and YouTube have increased our number of requests as well. Since this work is at the item level, it does sometimes interfere with our processing priorities.

No impact on processing although we now use 2.0 applications for dissemination of information about holdings and services.

No significant impact. (2 responses)

No time to test, would like to add "collection user" information, need to work on automating output from our systems, as our collection information is not stable. Also, as we create EAD/xml structured information it enables us to more easily link to systems.

None—another waste of time in light of the backlog of materials that do not have the basic description noted in immediately preceding box.

Not using Web 2.0 applications.

Planning to explore.

This is not applicable to us at the present time.

This mainly concerns our digital collections programs.

We are considering using Flickr to mount some photographic archival material, but have not yet gone live.

We are interesting in exploring these applications. We are creating libguides that facilitate the use of RSS feeds, widgets, blogs, etc.

We are not currently using Web 2.0 applications and social software except for Facebook, which thus far has been used only to promote collection openings and other special collections-related events.

We are only beginning to use Web 2.0 applications. We do not anticipate that it will affect decisions about which collections to process or the level of processing. We have some photographs in Flickr. We put in Flickr photographs which have been digitized and have item-level description.

We are using Flickr. This is too new to evaluate.

We aren't yet using these tools, but we are considering it.

We do not use Web 2.0 applications and social software.

We don't use any of these tools.

We have a blog with Google analytics on it. I run quarterly reports and the results have been terrific. We don't spend a terrible amount of time on it and thus far it has been a fun way to share things with the community.

We have no plans at this time to use these for Manuscript Division collection descriptions.

We have not had time to do much of this yet.

We have only begun to experiment with this; again our current html structure does not facilitate this, another reason we want to move "content" to a database structure.

We have put some things on YouTube with links back to our Web site. Some of the comments have been very helpful, others are just inane. I would like to enable tagging on some of our databases; we just haven't gotten that far yet.

We hope to eventually enable tagging for our digitized collections to allow users to submit additional identifying info/metadata but we have not started that yet. We do have a Facebook page that promotes our collections.

We're just starting to experiment with this; no conclusions yet. We have three blogs in process (Columbia Curators' Choices; Adventures in Processing; and Notes from 2M11). All have been very successful in terms of directing people our way. I don't care if only two people see it—that's two more than before.

Web 2.0 apps and social software do not impact how we process.

When we make processing decisions, this is not important in our decisionmaking.

Impact of providing access to collections through databases N=55

Access via a database is under development.

All of our finding aids are available through one search interface. That access hasn't affected our processing decisions.

Bibliographic records in OPAC originally had high impact on usage and hence in processing, but the impact is not as great now. We do not generally know if researchers find records in the OPAC database or on the Web site. Archives & Manuscripts Department materials are not yet available through our institutional repository (IR).

(By databases, I mean bibliographic databases.) Moderate increase in awareness of collections. Becoming less significant as volume of finding aids available increases and searching mechanisms refined.

Database access has been restricted to internal reference use.

Databases are developed to complement collections not processed to the item level resulting in increased researcher interest.

Databases for in-house use and access to location information and basic collection management information is made easier.

Databases for several of our collections makes searching more efficient and productive. None of these databases are currently available for anything but onsite access but we are making plans to make some of them accessible online.

Databases we are in include Archives USA, WorldCat, and Archives Grid. An increased focus, because of contributing to WorldCat, on creating catalog records for collections at all levels of processing. Otherwise, don't know that there has been a specific impact besides that stated about having finding aids online: With minimal processing, we've gone with the idea that some info is better than none and having any information on the Web will enhance access. Finding aids for full, minimally, or preliminarily processed collections are posted. Ability to keyword search has probably made it easier to accept minimal processing as adequate for a collection ever to receive. Also has affected cataloging records since we don't have to try to jam as much as we can into a MARC record any more for it to be findable online.

Depends on the database. Adding collection-level records to the bibliographic database does not seem to generate or increase use. Once a finding aid has been Googled or crawled by another indexer, use is often immediate.

Don't provide access through databases.

Don't really utilize this.

Extremely important for us since ARCHEION and CAIN are used to locate archives. We do not use databases at our own Web sites.

Finding aids are made available through OPAC, which expands the range of users. We take into consideration patron needs and anticipate collection use, which may affect processing priorities.

Has allowed for quicker easier access at the item level.

Has no effect.

If you consider Online Archive of California a database, this has proven very helpful to the academic community — but the wider world Googles you. All Internet presence enhances use, often by offsite researchers who cannot visit, and who expect everything to be digitized. So sometimes providing descriptions but no related digital content can be frustrating to researchers, and not everything can be digitized.

Images and other materials that are included in our online databases must be prepared for scanning and item-level description, these are the only items with this level of description.

Little.

MARC records encourages minimal processing to provide at least collection-level access.

Need content management system. Some use with OAC.

Need to process/reprocess to address historical anomalies in how material is described.

No impact though there are considerations of data input, interface connections, and maintenance.

No impact. (5 responses)

None used as yet.

Not a factor at present.

Not always as easy as it sounds. More planning, finding staff/students to work on projects and working with IT to publish the database.

Only recently implemented an EAD search functionality and have not analysed traffic. We utilize databases internally for all kinds of collections access and management activities.

Our Archon Web posting of series (what you seem to want to call "collections") is a database that provides access. An Archon record is essential to anything we consider processed.

Our catalog records are in OCLC and our local OPAC. We spend time creating subject headings and performing authority control on major names to promote controlled access to these and integration with other libraries' collections. Our finding aids are part of the Online Archive of California, as well as linked in our local OPAC in order to promote the accessibility of these collections.

Our database will provide contextual and hierarchical detail to our holdings. We will seek to provide access through finding aids on the Web, our database, and The CAT. These multiple portals all provide differing ways of accessing this archival and manuscript material, and offer overlapping ways of promoting access.

Patrons would like to see all collections digitized and available online.

Pilot project digitizing 22 linear foot manuscript collection running 2008–2010, impact assessed upon completion of project.

Primarily in-house use only right now.

Rare, done for photographs — better user access.

The easily discoverable HTML finding aid on our Web site is still the primary access tool for most researchers, followed closely by our EAD finding aids in the Northwest Digital Archives database. I am not aware of the impact of other databases.

These days we try to provide immediate online access to new acquisitions by at least putting a title record in Archon. It is also a great way for staff to track new acquisitions and locations. We submit our collection records to Archives Grid and Archives USA.

This is done in-house for collections that are not online, otherwise the patron can search on their own. Biggest impact is in-house.

This is still developing as MARC records are being generated from EAD records created by processors.

This is used by the University Archives, that record groups that are processed have folder-level description, and those that are not processed list the name of the record group without further information.

We are converting information in existing offline databases to MARC-like records to add to our online catalog.

We do not provide access through a database. (2 responses)

We do not use databases other than the library catalogue.

We do provide some specialized reference services using internal databases, although trying to convert those to

publically accessible EAD.

We don't provide public access for internal databases.

We have databases that have been very helpful to our users for the Peabody Awards Collection and the WSB Newsfilm Collection. For now the databases are separate but in the future we will have one joined database to all our holdings.

We have done this with some collections and images. It sometimes makes it harder for people to find with search engines, but it has some advantages once you get into the database.

We have no plans at this time to provide access to collections through databases.

We use Inmagic software dbtextworks. Access to collections is greatly improved as searching can be done not only within but across collections; results can be saved, tailored for individual queries.

Working to convert databases to EAD to provide uniform front end to all descriptions.

Impact of Archival Management Software, such as Archon, Archival Toolkit, Cuadva STAR, Eloquent Archives, CollectiveAccess, etc. N=50

Absolutely essential to considering something processed. See prior box. [Our Archon Web posting of series (what you seem to want to call "collections") is a database that provides access. An Archon record is essential to anything we consider processed.]

Archivists Toolkit facilitates deeper descriptive levels and the capture of administrative data. It facilitates the creation of more dynamic finding aids and streamlines our day-to-day management of the collections.

Archivists' Toolkit has allowed us to create structured output, and been the impetus to establish content standards and practices for elements that require creation or writing of content for the elements.

Change is anticipated as a participating institution in the PACSCL CLIR grant during 2009/2010 which expects to use Archivists' Toolkit.

Currently implementing Archon, as most user-friendly and easiest interface of reviewed options. With potential for online access, combined sets of information on collections, export and import of EAD.

Do not have. We are currently looking into Archivists' Toolkit.

Do not use. (2 responses)

Has no effect.

Just beginning to explore their use.

Just starting to use Archivists' Toolkit. Looks promising if loading into Online Archive of California proves to be seamless. Not sure yet how much AT may slow down the descriptive process.

Little.

Made creating a descriptive finding aid in an online environment, including a database, much easier. Students have found the process of a fill in the blank form easy to input information.

N/A We are currently testing Archivists Toolkit.

None. (4 responses)

None used as yet. (3 responses)

Not using any of these.

Not using these.

See above. These days we try to provide immediate online access to new acquisitions by at least putting a title record in Archon. It is also a great way for staff to track new acquisitions and locations. We submit our collection records to Archives Grid and Archives USA.

Software to be acquired and used in the near future.

To be determined; just implementing new archives management software (Minisis).

We are beginning to use Archivists' Toolkit. We expect little impact on processing decisions. It may improve our decision making, as we will have better collection management information. It should also help us streamline our workflows as we can enter information in one place that we previously had to enter in multiple databases.

We are considering and investigating the Archivists' Toolkit.

We are experiment with Archon.

We are exploring the toolkit but implementation is problematic in relation to our workflow. Toolkit does not provide reporting needed for ARL stats.

We are implementing Archon now.

We are just beginning to use Archivists' Toolkit and anticipate the impact will initially slow down processing during the initial phase of implementation, training, and revision of workflow; other impacts include data entry and maintenance for finding aids and accession records.

We are just implementing AT for accessioning manuscript collections. Although the accession records are searchable only by our unit staff, the easily accessible information is already having an impact on intellectual access to unprocessed collections. We will be exploring the use of AT as a preliminary or minimal processing tool to increase access to new accessions and older unprocessed ones.

We are now in the planning stages to implement Archivists' Toolkit in our department.

We are planning on implementing AT this summer.

We do not as yet use archival management software, though I'm interested in the Aeon software package from Atlas Systems for managing use of all materials in Special Collections, especially registering researchers and recording uses, permissions, copying orders, and the like.

We do not have AMS (instead we have a precariously large Access database that serves as our AMS) but are examining the possibility of acquiring one.

We do not use any archival management software.

We do not use archival management software, though we do employ an in-house FileMaker Pro database. I cannot think of any processing decisions that have been influenced by our use of this tool, though it simplifies and speeds up many of our processing activities (easier to find materials, easier to update locations, easier to accession items, etc.).

We do not use archival management software. (4 responses)

We have adopted the Archivists' Toolkit for the University Archives, which helps centralize all our accession and

collection data, including records management data (retention, disposition, etc.).

We have chosen not to use these software packages.

We have just started using Archivists' Toolkit for collection level records.

We have no plans at this time to use archival management software.

We use Archivists' Toolkit for accessions only.

When we make processing decisions, this is not important in our decision making.

Working toward.

Impact of digitization projects N=65

A couple of major digitization projects have greatly influences the level of processing. These digitization projects have driven detailed description and processing work.

Access and use of photographic materials for research and publication use.

Decisions for digitizing are determined by a number of factors: unique collections that we wish to highlight; research value to the campus and other users; size of collection; condition of collection; available funding (internally or externally), etc.

Digital projects are made available on the scarab Internet sites via link and on the UM Digital Library site. These products are primarily serial publications specific to the campus or the university system. We use an introductory paragraph or two that resembles a collection description from an inventory and then digital publications issues can be either keyword searched or browsed by the date and or issue number.

Digital projects drive item-level description which often impacts processing decisions.

Digitization does push us to a more refined level of description, even though it need not necessarily do so. We do shoot for the most detail we can deliver and we will be tested by our first truly mass digitization project, which begins next week, but thus far our meso-level projects have been possible at more or less the item level.

Digitization has had some impact on user requests for copies and it has increased demand for other materials to be digitized. We have received compliments on digitized material which suggests an impact on collection reputation.

Digitization has meant that all or parts of our collection must be treated at the item level.

Digitization has resulted in increased demand for the use of the originals, and high demand for copies of digital surrogates.

Digitization is currently not a part of processing unless as a preservation measure; Digital objects are managed in contentDM and any digitized items are not integrated into the finding aid except at the collection level with a link to the digital content in contentDM/the Louisiana Digital Library. However, reflecting the trend to minimal processing, digitization projects are increasingly considering and in some cases employing non-item level description—either folder level or group level (within a folder but not at the item level).

Digitization of collection material slows its processing, but has not affected decision making on the level of processing.

Digitization of collections does not impact the processing but does, at times, impact the EAD markup.

Digitization projects drive descriptive policy (more granular metadata) than the other way around.

Digitization projects offer a powerful inducement to preparing finding aids to provide access to those collections.

Digitization projects often result in the reprocessing of collections to the item level as well as collection rehousing and preservation reformatting as needed.

Digitization projects, which are usually grant funded, move unprocessed material to the head of the processing and cataloging line.

Digitization usually requires item-level metadata that must be manually contributed. It takes resources away from collective description.

Expertise gained through EAD work positioned Curator as policy leader in library-wide digitization programs.

For us, this has more to do with making the finding aid for a collection work with digital objects from that collection that live in a digital assets management system. This is especially relevant as we push on with our efforts to digitize whole collections. For processing, this effort has an impact on the levels of description in the finding aid because of the way links from the finding aid to the digital objects are created. It all has to work together.

Great for patron access and preservation, but our digitization efforts tend to be somewhat driven by patron demand for specific collections.

Has no effect.

High demand for university sports images; demand for some photograph collections.

If a collection looks like a good potential digitization project, it would be placed in a higher priority processing queue; but how it is processed would not change.

If we are going to digitize something, we need to have it processed to a more minute level than otherwise.

If we are processing a collection in conjunction with digitizing some or all of it, it's likely to affect the level of processing. Both the selection of items to digitize, and the type/quantity of metadata required for digital objects, are likely to require item-level processing of all or part of the collection.

Impact on staff, still reviewing new approaches.

In process.

Increased knowledge of our collections; but again, item-level digitizing is time consuming and labor intensive, and can interfere with collections processing.

Increased requests for item-level control and description of digital assets.

Increased usage of our collections due to online access helps to determine which collections to digitize based on usage.

Increases use of collection but also requires resources.

Introduces a new element to decision making about processing, in some cases better access for users.

It takes a great deal of time by department personnel to scan, create appropriate metadata, and place materials online but the result is increased visibility and access. Within the last year our Digital Library Services department has provided more support for departmental digitization projects than in the past and this has really helped move projects forward.

Large and looming. We have 30 hours of Newsfilm digitized, 32 hours of interview footage, and 850 Peabody programs digitized. This has affected us on every level from preservation to metadata creation. It has certainly improved access to the collections and has increased use of the collections.

More processing work: item-level description not previously done; management of digital objects file versions.

Need to make sure that finding aid descriptions are detailed enough to reuse as metadata. Link images to finding aids after the finding aid is completely tagged and the images have been loaded to contentDM.

No impact yet.

None. (2 responses)

Often requires more detailed description at the item level but this work is performed by staff in our digital library which means their workload will impact decisions for this level.

On occasion drives the processing decisions and increases the visibility of a collection.

Pilot project digitizing 22 linear foot manuscript collection running 2008–2010, impact assessed upon completion of project.

Put it up and they will come.

RBSC: requires accurate data set; more detail in description.

Requires more item-level processing; while we're moving away from more detailed access, digitization is pulling us back in this direction.

Significant impact.

The few digitization projects we've completed have increased use exponentially. We digitized 6,000–7,000 wax cylinders with an IMLS grant and anyone can listen or download. There have been several million hits on the cylinder Web site and access to some of the rarer items has resulted in major new directions for research in historical sound recordings.

The Library's pilot digitization projects have demonstrated the usefulness of repurposing metadata. The projects have also raised the need for more effective content management, especially for cross collection searching and linking to digital content.

The opportunity to add a collection to a list of digitization projects has a major impact on which collections get what level of processing.

Things must be processed to the item level.

This conflicts with MPLP because especially for photos they really need item-level description to be useful to and locatable by patrons.

This has a tremendous amount of impact. Obviously, it's what our researchers want. It brings exposure to the archives and gets users interested.

To be determined; pilot projects just underway.

Top priority.

Useful for reference but inherent expectation that everything can and will be available electronically.

We are only digitizing from processed collections.

We digitize only processed collections, so decisions about what to digitize and what to process must be coordinated. In general, we are digitizing collections in order to provide better access to important collections, and these are collections that also have a high priority for processing. Digitization as we have done it so far requires item-level description—

something we ordinarily do not do. This item-level description has been considered part of the digitization process rather than part of processing. As we go forward with digitization, we will consider creating metadata at the folder or series level rather than the item level for some collections. These decisions about metadata will be similar to decisions we currently make about processing and will be made in conjunction with processing decisions.

We have digitized already existing finding aids.

We have quite a few digital collections, but these are not directly influencing processing decisions (at least, not yet).

We have several large projects in place, as well as a goodly number of smaller ones. Nearly all draw good traffic and frequent follow-up questions.

We might consider processing levels as we consider metadata for potential future digital projects, but have not yet done so.

We've digitized quite a lot, although I don't know that it has influenced our processing decisions.

When we make processing decisions, this is not important in our decision making.

While patrons expect everything to be online, we are careful in selecting appropriate collections for digitization.

With over 50,000 digitized items available in our Digital Archives, use and discoverability of materials has increased.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

12. Is there a written processing policy for manuscript and archival collections? N=72

Yes	39	54%
No	33	46%

If no, does your unit/department/library have standard practices concerning processing that are communicated to all processing staff? N=33

Yes	32	97%
No	1	3%

If yes, how are the practices communicated? N=31

Archives: verbally, usually archivist to student workers.

Processing procedures manual. (7 responses)

E-mail, in person.

Face to face, meetings and e-mail.

Handouts and verbal instruction.

Hands-on training with verbal instruction and practice.

In consultation with Special Collections Cataloging, which is part of the cataloging department of the libraries.

In person during training. Via consultation in meetings as needed.

Oral instruction and following precedents.

Orally by supervisor, or by manual.

Part of staff training.

SAA, EAD, OAC, National Archivist Standards, staff meetings, and training.

Staff meetings, e-mail, training sessions.

Team/project discussions, by supervisors, and in department-wide meetings.

The existing processing manual is out of date. An EAD manual is in the planning stages.

The Head of Archival Processing communicates local standard practices orally, via written plans, or through e-mail.

Through one-on-one training and some locally produced handouts.

Training materials and guidelines.

Verbally and by demonstration and example. The librarians in charge of each collecting area are free to exercise their own best judgment.

Verbally with hands-on instruction. (4 responses)

We have biweekly staff meetings and we discuss workflow and processing concerns at those meetings. With only 1.5 catalogers on staff it is very difficult to get collections processed to the item level. We concentrate on 2 collections — Peabody Awards and WSB Newsfilm — those are the most used collections we have.

We have sets of instructions for individual steps in processing, from description to preservation.

We use RAD (Rules for Archival Description).

Written policies and practice are currently being revised for use by staff.

13. Does your unit/department/library have an in-house processing procedures manual for manuscripts and archives? N=70

Yes	52	74%
No	18	26%

14. Is there a document that lists the workflow steps for “processing” a collection? N=71

Yes	51	72%
No	20	28%

Additional comments. N=20

Each collection given to a processor gets a list of instructions. Some instructions are general and apply to all collections, while others may be specific to that particular collection.

Has been two to three years since last review and surely needs updating; but the core has been designed for "durability."

I believe we have a document, and I think it's available online, but if so it's wildly out of date. One of my tasks is to create a new/updated one. Once updated, it will be available online. The library as a whole also has a cataloging wiki, where we maintain information about cataloging manuscript collections; this information of course also applies to collection-level EAD records, since they're very similar to MARC records.

In progress.

Only in terms of the stages of processing a gift-in-kind donation.

Processing practices are mostly communicated by oral instruction at the time of use.

Processors are trained in-house and expected to become familiar with procedures and practices as published in standard professional literature and manuals.

See final comments, re: draft documents for processing procedures.

Separate manual for cataloging as well.

The above-mentioned workflow document is currently in process.

The University Archives has a processing manual to assist staff, particularly students who work on projects for their archives class. The Curator of Manuscripts dictates processing procedures for the manuscript collection.

There are several manuals and workflow documents, depending on the format and the unit in which the materials are located. These probably all need to be updated.

This applies only to are largest and continually growing collection — the Peabody Awards.

Varies from program to program.

We have a checklist that each processor (whether curator, paraprofessional, student, volunteer, or intern) must complete indicating which steps they have completed.

Work flow is "professionalized" from accession registration through processing and EAD finding aids being mounted.

Workflow steps are part of the procedures manual.

PROCESS EVALUATION

15. Does your unit/department/library have procedures and/or tools to monitor and evaluate manuscript and archives processing activities? N=72

Yes	38	53%
No	34	47%

If yes, please briefly describe the evaluation tools and procedures. N=36

Accessions database used to track processing productivity by calculating l.f. processed.

All descriptions are reviewed by the unit head (University Archives, Historical Collections and Labor Archives, and Rare Books and Manuscripts) and the Processing Coordinator before going to the Special Collections Cataloging Team for cataloging.

All staff review the finding aids to ensure they are following the template and general processing rules.

Although it varies by collection, we have others in the department read and comment on plans and products; such feedback can be used to revise for improvement.

Annual reports.

Checklists, wikis.

Collection processing is supervised and reviewed by librarians.

Curator holds monthly or infrequent meetings with processing staff to gauge progress or investigate bottlenecks. No quotas or micromanagement, however.

Develop a processing work plan, as well as a review of the finding aid before it goes live.

Editing by supervisor, and editing by Webmaster before uploading.

Excel spreadsheet; simple tally of what each archivist/student/intern processes.

Finding aids are reviewed by Department Head and Metadata by the head of Metadata Services.

More qualitative than quantitative, finding aids are evaluated and edited by the director.

No formal evaluation in place; we respond to patron questions and comments and make revisions/corrections accordingly.

Online reference statistics reflect effectiveness of collection descriptions. A new "tracking" spreadsheet will be used to generate reports so productivity can be reviewed.

Our Workflows staff reviews all finding aids for DACS compliance and EAD Best Practice compliance.

Processing records, processing activity logs, and work completed logs.

Procedures in the sense of work plans and activity reports. We are moving toward project management software, but this is not as yet fully implemented.

Processing activities initiate with a discussion with archivist or associate archivist, activities are reviewed and discussed during the project, and the final product is reviewed by archivist and or assistant archivist.

Processing begins with a written proposal of organization and description that is approved by the Assistant Head and Head of the Preparation Section and by the manuscript historian or specialist responsible for the collection's subject area. The proposal continues to serve as the point of discussion during periodic reviews of the project, which culminate in the circulation of a preliminary draft of the finding aid to the Assistant Head of the Preparation Section, followed by an editing draft that circulates through the head of the section, the manuscript historian/subject specialist, the division's Reading Room, and the cataloger.

Processing form is completed for each collection and submitted to the supervisor of the processor.

Processing projects are reviewed by University Archivist.

Processing worksheets; weekly, monthly and final reviews.

Processors' work on materials is monitored to conform to general productivity expectations based on previously established production rates.

Regular meeting and reports on progress.

Review of all finding aids by department head; review of all EAD and MARC records by metadata archivist; statistical summaries of processing activities.

Statistics of volume processed during a year.

Students fill out a paper form as they process. This information is then entered into a MS Access database.

Supervising archivists have this responsibility. They review all or most work that's done.

Supervision by the Manuscripts Librarian, University Archivist, and Accessioning and Processing Archivist.

Supervisors monitor and evaluate on a project-by-project basis.

The Head of Archival Processing and Cataloging conducts weekly, or as needed, meetings with processing staff and students.

Use of Archivist's Toolkit for monitoring activities. Supervisor evaluation of processor's activities.

We don't have formal tools, but we are constantly monitoring and evaluating processing activities. This happens within the Technical Services Department (especially as we continue to standardize processes across the Department) and with colleagues outside the Department, particularly curatorial and public services staff members.

We have a tool to check/evaluate our EAD finding aids against a set of required criteria. We also evaluate performance against annual goals for both individuals and the department. Other than that, we have no formal tools.

We have updates at staff meetings, and I ask for statistical information from catalogers and archivist. We also keep track of our digital transfers and file creation.

16. Does your unit/department/library collect statistics about processing manuscript and archives collections? N=72

Yes	68	94%
No	4	6%

If yes, which categories of statistics are gathered? Check all that apply. N=69

Number of accessions including physical size	63	91%
Physical size of collections processed	62	90%
Number of finding aids digitized/encoded	58	84%

Number of catalog records created/updated	52	75%
Number of items digitized	37	54%
Other	14	20%

Please describe other statistics category. N=14

AV items outsourced or duplicated.

Circulation and copy orders; preservation photocopying.

Mainly for insurance purposes.

Number of collections processed.

Number of collections processed; number and size of collections rehoused (if a collection, processed or unprocessed, is only being rehoused).

Number of core records that are prepared, volume of cubic feet of accessions.

Number of inventories created, number of existing inventories converted to DACS format.

Number of pages of finding aids generate.

Preservation activities and number of hours per work completed.

Since we are at present engaged in retrospective conversion of existing finding aids to EAD, we have a spreadsheet to track elements of that project (# pages converted, # finding aids created, # new MARC records generated, etc.)

Supplies costs: archival supplies used for each collection.

The source of accessions (gift/deposit/purchase/internal transfer/external transfer); items in arrears; items processed; items added to collections; items transferred to other divisions in the Library; items disposed of either by pulping or return to donor.

We also maintain usage statistics for manuscripts and archival collections.

We track types of materials (photos, audiotapes, etc.) processed. Also preservation/conservation stats.

Please briefly describe how statistics are reported. N=68

An Excel workbook exists for each year, each month is a worksheet. Stats are entered and tallied. All staff see what the other is processing.

Annual reports. (6 responses)

Annual reports created by our department, which are sent to the University Libraries administrative office.

Annual reports; ARL preservation stats; archival cataloging is compiled with other cataloging stats for the whole library.

Annually according to the Library online form. Also separate annual report published by University Archives online.

Annually, for internal planning purposes and externally for various organizations.

ARL and McLean's magazine. Also for insurance purposes on an Excel spreadsheet.

ARL annual report.

ARL annually requests a figure for total linear footage of manuscript and archival collections, which we provide. In addition, there are quarterly MIS statistics which require the linear footage added to manuscript and archival collections.

By inclusion in the annual report of the department head to the Librarian.

Catalogers send me statistics of records. Archivist provides information on accessions with physical size. Three years ago we did a full inventory of the collection to prepare for a move to a new building — these statistics have been very helpful when deciding on processing and grant applications. We also have a workflow spreadsheet for digitizing collections.

Collected by archivist and curator and reported to library admin annually.

Collected in-house for Departmental annual report.

Data informally maintained. Some data is reported to Assessment Librarian. (Archives).

Departmental annual report, ARL Stats.

For each fiscal year, the number of collections received, the total linear feet of growth, and the valuation of this annual growth.

Form is submitted to supervisor (students to Library Assistant, graduate assistants to Manuscripts Processing Archivist, LA's and MSP Archivist to curator of manuscripts) and compiled for personnel evaluations and departmental annual reports; also entered into our accession and processing tracking database (Access) and periodically reviewed by Curator of MS throughout the year; qualitatively, all finding aids are reviewed by the Curator of MS before being published; catalog records are created by manuscripts processing staff and reviewed by the Special Collections Cataloger, who in turn does all of the cataloging of university records.

Gathered monthly and reported quarterly to management.

Generally in the department annual report, as well as UC and ARL surveys.

In annual report or to lib admin. As requested.

In monthly reports by collection, annual report for department.

In the annual report, through publicity press releases and in listserves.

In the past we kept much more detailed individual and department statistics. Feeling that the work of maintaining statistics was overtaking the work itself, we have since reduced our statistics to keeping only those we need for ARL reporting.

Internal annual reports; reported to Northwest Digital Archives (our regional consortial database of encoded finding aids).

Internally to the statistics collector.

Linear feet processed and collection level MARC records are reported to the library administration each year.

Management uses are made of statistics. Accession records are included in various reports. A new "tracking" spreadsheet will generate reports on size of records processed and number of descriptions (EAD and MARC) completed. Annual performance evaluations include processing statistics.

Monthly and annually, in excel spreadsheets.

Monthly production log; semi-annual report for digitization projects; annual report for all manuscript processing.

Monthly within the unit.

Monthly, quarterly, and annual reports indicate number and size of collections accessioned and processed as well as preservation supplies used.

Most statistics are compiled for inclusion in our annual reports to the University Librarian. With the adoption of the Archivist Toolkit, we will compile and produce more statistical reports that will help guide our processing priorities.

Number of accessions and size are reported monthly to the Dean, finding aids encoded, records created, number of accessions and size, number of collections processed, number of items digitized and size of significant collections processed are in the annual report to the Dean.

Numerical counts collected for internal purposes and ARL reporting.

Online database. No formal reports are generated at this time.

Our in-house FileMaker Pro database is capable of generating numerous reports, among them those listed above. We also have an Image Database that tracks items digitized for patrons; however, it does not track outsourced or internal mass digitization projects.

Our statistics are reported in our departmental and library annual reports and in ARL statistics.

Plan on implementing additional statistics once AT is fully implemented.

Processing statistics are used in the annual evaluation of the Special Collections Assistant for Processing and Technical Services. Other statistics are gathered for annual reports, including ARL.

Processing statistics recorded on an annual basis.

Quarterly and annual statistics.

Quarterly to the Associate Dean of Special Collections and Digital Programs and then submitted to the Dean of Libraries.

Recorded in an Excel spreadsheet.

Reported annually as part of ARL statistics.

Reported monthly as part of libraries' ongoing data collection activities.

Reported to ARL. Reported in the department's annual report. Will use the Archivist's Toolkit to collect and report statistics, but we have not developed that capability yet.

Reported to central Cataloging Department, which in turn compiles institutional statistics for ARL.

Reports are made to ARL and other entities to whom we report statistical information. Some information is reported only in librarians' annual appraisal and development documents.

Some are reported to ARL, some are more used for internal reporting, tracking progress and benchmarking.

Statistics are gathered once a year and report to our Library's assessment officer. The statistics are also given to the department chair.

Statistics are kept largely informally (monthly for reference activity and yearly for accessions) and are assembled and reconciled at the end of the fiscal year when annual reports are submitted to library administration.

Statistics are presented annually and compared against both past accomplishments and agreed-upon production goals.

Statistics are reported in annual reports, ARL reports, and in-house assessment.

Statistics are reported monthly by staff; there is also a Departmental monthly report.

Statistics reported in annual reports.

Summarized in annual report.

The Processing Coordinator generates/collects it. They are reported regularly to the Department Head and the department's unit heads.

These statistics may be provided through a unit annual report or through statistical reports to ARL.

Through the Archives annual report.

To Library Administration and if requested state and national surveys.

We do record certain key information in pastperfect (which controls collection location information) — e.g., Collection-level record? Processing Level? — and we can create reports from this database that pull information from other fields and allow us to identify, for example, all minimally processed collections. A bit klutzy.

We normally incorporate these into an annual report for our unit.

Workload statistics are reported monthly by processing staff; numbers for collections processed are submitted at the conclusion of each project; key indicators of items acquired, processed, and added to the division's holdings are reported quarterly and annually, as well the number of finding aids created and digitized and the number of catalog records created and revised and authorities established.

ESTIMATING PROCESSING WORK AND PROCESSING METRICS

As reviewers for national grant applications for processing manuscript and archival collections, we became aware that it is necessary for the applicant to estimate how long it will take to complete the project. We want to learn how your institution determines the time it takes to process a collection.

17. Please briefly describe how your unit/department/library calculates the amount of time it takes to process a manuscript or archival collection. N=69

1 hour per cubic box.

40 hours per linear foot — item level; 30 hours per linear foot — mixed formats, little or not arrangement; 20 hours per linear foot — average problems, papers have some order; 10 hours per linear foot — no organizational problems.

After preliminary review of a collection and decisions on processing levels, past experience is used to estimate processing time. If we were applying for a grant we might do some pilot project processing for firmer numbers. We are generally just interested in a rough estimate for internal purposes, and that information is for planning purposes.

An initial assessment of size and type of material, collection review and series establishment, item vs. Folder level, and extent of conservation activities.

Approximate times are based on the following variables: staff assigned (professional/student), size of collection, level of disorganization or complexity of collection. For example, it takes an experienced student processor about 20–30 hours to fully process 1 cubic foot of materials (beginning to end). It would take less if only an inventory and rehousing

is expected and more for complete rehousing, reformatting of damaged/fragile items, and the creation of multi-level electronic finding aid.

Archival collections are about 1.5 linear feet per day. Manuscripts are on a case-by-case basis.

Archives: use processing guidelines issued by Canadian Council of Archives. RBSC: based on past experience.

Archivists consider number of boxes in collection and whatever knowledge they have of the source or agency and its records to estimate the time required. The time estimate is adjusted as processing progresses.

Based on experimentation to obtain a general timeframe chiefly for grant-writing purposes, we estimate that high-end processing of a completely disorganized records center carton would take ~10 hours. When we know what the materials look like in particular cases (e.g., when estimating costs for donor-supported processing of a particular collection), we revise up or down to accommodate the materials.

Based on the wide variety of material types donated, project records show that processing speed will vary between 3 and 25 hours to process a linear foot of material.

By observation. Our figures range from 2 hours per foot to 10 (or so), depending on the level of experience of the processor and complexity of the project.

Calculations on based on experience and rates used by other archivists and provided through publication or via listservs.

Canadian Council of Archives Time Guidelines for archival processing (2007).

Consider size, existing documentation, how much of original or current arrangement can be retained, type of collection (19th century family papers v. 20th century organization) anticipated preservation work, and other duties of person collection will be assigned to. Very rough rule of thumb, averaging across all types of collections, 1.5 cubic feet a week.

Depends on condition, arrangement and type of materials when received, the importance of the collection materials and anticipated use. Staff and spend anywhere from 3 hours to 14 hours processing one standard 10" x 13" x 15" document box of materials.

Depends on the level. Level 2 (default series level control; intellectual arrangement): 35–50 l.f./month. Level 3 (combo series/folder level control; combo intellectual and physical arrangement): 20–30 l.f./month. Level 4: Folder level control; physical arrangement: 11–15 l.f./month.

Each collection is different and requires different attention. The size of the collection, the desired level of processing, and condition of material will help determine the time estimates.

Each collection presents its own profile in this respect, as the conditions of collections in terms of their size, condition, organization, and researcher interest varies. Frankly, our best guess for the amount of time it takes to process a collection depends on all of these factors and the capabilities and strengths of those assigned to process them. I'm not satisfied that a metric exists to provide such an estimate.

Estimation based on prior processing projects.

For a relatively well-organized manuscript collection or group of archival records, we use 3–4 hours per linear feet as the rule of thumb for processing time. If we decide not to refolder or not to list folders, we would reduce that time. If the collection is not well organized or is of very high research value (and thus requires more attention), we would increase that number. We would also increase the number if inexperienced staff process the collection. We would make different estimates if the collection consisted primarily of audiovisual material or born-digital material. We are currently collecting statistics on how long it takes to ingest and process born-digital material.

For modern office records, we estimate that one staff member can process one linear foot per day. For older records, the time frame varies considerably.

FTE hours spent on processing.

History and experience, also the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) published guidelines.

I don't believe we have calculated how much time it takes us.

I've always felt this was a false construct; there's too much variability to give an accurate assessment, and I wish granters would move away from this as an evaluative tool. That said, we roughly estimate that a record center box of homogeneous material takes about 2 hours to process; heterogeneous 4 hours.

Informally done and calculated on level of processing: 6–10 linear ft/hr at folder level; 2–5 linear ft/hr at item level; 12–20 linear ft/hr at series level.

No formal estimates are calculated for nonfunded projects as competing duties and diversity among collections make it impractical and inaccurate.

Past experience with similar collections and the experience of others (as reported in the professional literature, in correspondence and conversations, and via listservs).

Physical examination of materials, amount of rehousing or arrangement (if necessary), amount of audio visual content, processing experience.

Processing manual uses two guidelines to help calculate estimates: Lynch article in *The Midwestern Archivist*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1982; Manuscripts Processing Manual: Beinecke Library. Yale University, 1997. We also consider and internal production "quota" of at least 2–3 boxes per week.

Processing archivists identifies a ballpark figure.

Processing estimates can be found for grant applications for the Archives Association of Ontario. The Archivist Librarian monitors progress on a weekly basis with the archivists.

Processors annotate their time cards (or spreadsheets) with when they start and finish work on a series.

Reviews size, complexity, holdings of a collection and make an individual collection assessment. Also use 20 hours per linear foot.

Rough estimates are created based on the level processing and description desired, the level of experience and number of staff available to process a collection, and the organizational and physical condition of the materials relative to previously processed collections.

Strictly based on past experience. I assess the size and condition (physical and intellectual) of the material and arrive at a amount of time (either with a full-time or part-time employee and possible assistants) that I consider appropriate and reasonable.

Students and staff keep track of time spent processing a collection and record the information in an MS Access database.

The division takes into account intrinsic value, research value, size, condition, and potential reproduction or surrogates (e.g. Microfilming and digitizing require the removal of fasteners and other special handling techniques). There is no simple formula for estimating, but when the basics are discerned we've been successful in establishing probable outcomes.

The major factor in calculating time are size of collection, whether it has a workable arrangement, possibility of containing restricted information and condition (preservation or needs) of the collection.

The supervising librarian and processor set preliminary goals in the survey stage. These estimates are adjusted during processing as progress is made or obstacles are encountered.

These numbers represent the total time for processing, from planning the project to posting to the Web. Low: 1–2 hours per linear foot. Medium: 5–8 hours per linear foot. High: 10–15 hours per linear foot. Highest: 20–25 hours per linear foot. The levels of work are further explained below. When organizing a collection: Low – Retain the original order of a series. Medium – Refine the original order of files within a series. High – Provide a new file scheme within a series. Highest – Arrange items within the files. When housing and preserving a collection: Low – Rebox collection, remove bulky or damaging hardware (e.g., Frames, notebooks, rubber bands, etc.). Folder loose items. Keep existing folders. Staple loose labels to existing folders. Medium – Refolder collection. Sleeve significant photographs and negatives. Isolate acidic materials. High – Rehouse all media. Remove paperclips and rusty staples. Perform preservation photocopying. Sleeve fragile items. Highest – Perform repairs. Create custom enclosures. When describing a collection: Low – Provide container-level list and summary analysis of context and content. Provide circa dates for boxes. Medium – Retain creator-provided description (revising when absolutely necessary) while inventorying at the file unit level. Provide circa dates for folders. High – Revise creator-provided description or create new description that closely follows DACS. Provide accurate dates for folders. Highest – Provide item-level description and/or detailed scope and content notes for file units. Provide item counts and/or individually number items. When reviewing and identifying materials for restrictions or privacy issues: Low – Known or suspected restricted material is spread throughout a collection. No efforts taken to identify and segregate materials. Whole collection is restricted. Medium – A whole series or subseries is identified as restricted and housed separately from open materials. High – File units are identified as restricted and relocated elsewhere in the collection. Highest – Individual items are identified as restricted. Items are removed from their original location, each documented with a separation sheet, and relocated elsewhere in the collection.

This depends on the processing level and collection size.

This is one of the most challenging aspects of processing. To forecast processing time, many factors have to be considered, and even with careful planning our estimates are not very accurate. Local factors have made this even more complicated in the past; most of our manuscript collections are very heterogeneous, and they have often been received in very poor (or no) order. The necessity of sorting and physically arranging disorderly collections is one of our most time-consuming processing activities.

This varies wildly, depending on format, homogeneity of collection, level to which we decide to process, and experience of staff doing the work. For larger collections, with some homogeneity, to do to the folder level we generally estimate about four hours per linear foot, but this increases if any significant preservation work is involved (like reformatting audiotapes), if the collection is in disarray or unfolded, or due to other factors, like multi-language collections.

Through experience, staffing levels, level of processing, and the size and condition of the collection we make calculations about the time it will take to process a collection.

Type of material x average time in-house = projected time.

Unfortunately, at the present time our calculations are not systematically made.

Use 10 hours per box (cubic foot) as the official, know that often more time is required, depends on who is working on a collection, students, interns require more prep and hands on supervision.

Use guidelines put out several years ago by the Canadian Council of Archives (which are pending revision).

Using processing statistics and evaluation of the complexity of an unprocessed collections is the usual way we determine

the time it takes to process a collection. We have no hard and set policy or metric for establishing a time for processing.

Using the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library processing manual estimating processing rates at <http://www.library.yale/beinecke/manuscript/process>.

We calculate numbers of linear feet and project based on estimated amount of time per linear foot.

We currently don't calculate this.

We develop a processing plan for each collection with an estimated time frame. We consider the size of the collection, amount of available staff time, similar collections already processed, anticipated use of the collection, available physical space for the actual processing to take place, physical condition of the materials, digitization potential, and other factors.

We do not track processing time on a regular basis. Nevertheless, we have been able to prepare fairly accurate processing cost figures for successful grant and donor-funded processing projects.

We don't have a preset pattern.

We don't have a standard way for determining the length of time it takes to process a collection. Curators typically look at a collection of similar size and assume that processing will take the same amount of time for the new collection.

We don't. Basically I would say that we haven't really had the time to calculate how much time all of this takes. Something we should do and want to do, but we don't have the time (or haven't made the time) to set this up to date.

We estimate the amount of time it will take to process a collection by factoring in the skill level and experience of the designated processor, the size, language, and complexity of the collection to be processed, and an initial determination (based on the appraisal) of the level of processing that will be required.

We find the information at Yale's Web site very helpful: <http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/manuscript/process/index.html>.

We look at the size of the collection, its general condition, whether it already has a folder guide (we ask departments to do those for collections they send), etc.

We look at the size of the collection, staff capabilities (experience and time), current arrangement of the collection, and whether the collection will require that all folders and/or boxes need replacement.

We record very roughly the amount of time each project takes. That number can be refined as far as the total number of days. We do not go beyond that.

We review the size, complexity, and state of order and usually process some sample boxes.

We typically don't need to do this but we expect a full-time processor to finish about 2 cubic feet per 8-hour day. This can vary greatly depending on the nature of the materials being processed.

We use an estimate of 6 hours per cubic foot box to arrange, describe, write a finding aid, and mark it up in EAD.

We use the figure of time to volume. We anticipate that a collection in moderate to good order takes about 8 hours for an intermediate skilled processor to complete 0.5 c.f. At the preliminary inventory level. Summary descriptions require much less time to prepare for the Web sites.

We would sample several different pieces of the collection to determine how homogenous the collection was, and what (if any) preservation/conservation needs it had. We would make an educated guess as to the level of processing and the level of description required by the majority of the material (series, folder, item), bearing in mind that some pieces might

require a different processing level. We would take into consideration size (linear ft.) From all of that, and based on prior experience with similar collections, we would give an educated estimate of hours required.

Whenever possible, we attempt to run some real-time experiments to collect information. For example, with the theater managers' reports mentioned earlier, we have indexed sample pages to the point we can project time requirements for the whole collection with some confidence. This is not always possible, of course, and a judgment must often be made on the basis of experience. A key difficulty is making a judgment on the expectation that A will do the work, but A leaves mid-course and the project is picked up by B — who has lesser or different abilities or knowledge.

18. Metrics is a formula used to measure or predict the success of outcomes. Does your unit/ department/library use processing metrics when making processing decisions? N=71

Yes	7	10%
No	64	90%

If yes, please briefly describe the formula and how it is applied to manuscript and archival collections processing. N=7

Factors considered: hours of staff time; type and condition of material and level of processing; size of collections.

Goals are set for complete processing of a collection and the status of processing, whether in progress, complete, etc., is reported through an annual report.

This has worked best for us with relatively orderly collections, especially heterogeneous ones.

Total linear feet of donation divided by hours processing (in half hour increments) — rate of processing from start to finish including (but not limited to the following: Identify donation size and material types, physical and intellectual condition, level of description required, outline procedures, initiate processing, record daily processing hours and tasks, evaluate upon completion of processing to determine work rate).

We compare our estimate of time required with the actual time elapsed for the processing.

When I arrived in October 2006 I began to keep metrics. November 2007: 8 (eight) lf was processed. (Four FTE archivists; all item-level drudgery). November 2008: 347 lf processed (MPLP, standards, consistency). Fiscal Year 2007/2008: 1/2 mile of material processed!! 1/2 mile! This year I expect to beat that.

Yes, in the sense that we have a general guideline for personal papers vs. Office records, etc.

STAFF TRAINING

19. Please indicate how staff who are responsible for processing manuscript and archival collections receive(d) their training. Check all that apply. N=72

On the job	72	100%
Professional association-sponsored workshops	66	92%
Library school	65	90%
Peers	56	78%
Conferences	54	75%
Professional journals and readings	54	75%
Electronic discussion lists	39	54%
In-house workshops	34	47%
Blog and online readings	26	36%
Other opportunity	8	11%

Please describe other opportunity. N=8

Graduate program in museum studies with archives emphasis.

Graduate school in applied history programs.

Other university courses/archives programs and professional certification processes.

Rare Book School.

Some of our graduate student assistants and professional FTE have completed archives and manuscript sequences in history departments.

Staff/Unit Training.

Student assistants who do the bulk of processing are trained by staff and use the processing manual as a reference.

Student processors (some undergraduates, but chiefly archive-oriented library school students) are given intensive in-house formal training individually and as a group.

20. What are the most important skills that staff need to acquire for processing manuscript and archival collections today? N=69

1. Basic knowledge of rehousing techniques. 2. Ability to organize collections. 3. Ability to write clear and concise collection and series descriptions.

1. Formal education in library/archival work, particularly cataloguing/archival description. 2. Appropriate subject background 3. Interest in and ability to analyse and articulate the content and context of archival material within the

descriptive standard framework. This last may be an innate trait — you may acquire #1 and #2 and still not be able to perform #3.

1) Graduate Education in an Archival Program in accord with the Society of American Archivists Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies. 2) Proven experience processing manuscript and archival collections .3) Personality traits including but not limited to: • Attention to detail • Honesty • Willingness to learn.

A respect for the intrinsic value of archival collections, to be detail oriented, and knowledgeable about archival theory/ practice.

Ability to be ruthless in completing work in a short time while not losing attention to detail; ability to see broad categories and establish “order out of chaos.”

Ability to organize work effectively, to set priorities, to analyze information from multiple sources, and demonstrated ability to seek out, learn, and apply new technologies.

Ability to pay attention to detail; be organized; ability to persevere, ability to alphabetize; experience in processing; ability to apply intelligence to determining an outline of arrangement; skill in composing effective biographical sketches, and scope and content notes.

Ability to process without inspecting every item, need good analytical skills in order to learn what they need to learn to facilitate research use, but not to get immersed in details. Also need to be able to do research up front in order to place the collection in historical content 3.

Ability to see big picture and apply it to whatever level of processing is being done; mastering XML encoding.

Ability to see both the forest and the trees.

Ability to see the overall importance of a collection and to be able to use that vision to organize the material to make it easily accessible to others.

Accuracy, attention to detail, knowing when to ask questions, flexibility, ability to acquire new skills quickly and, in these trying times, a sense of humor.

An ability to challenge the way it's always been done; creativity; the ability to take risks and question. WALLFLOWERS NEED NOT APPLY! The days of sitting alone in a room judiciously scanning each piece of paper are so over. Archives is about outreach, risk, and making material accessible by any means necessary—that means you not only process, but you promote them and—in so doing—yourself and the institution for which you work.

An ability to work quickly, to be able to identify broad categories of material for arrangement, and — most important — an aptitude for articulating in finding aids the contents and arrangement of a collection.

An understanding that the overall original order is important in efficient processing and not to create a new artificial order at the processing stage unless extraordinary circumstance present themselves. Not every page must be read or even handled and seldom is arrangement within the file folder level required. Also being able to identify a functional records series is invaluable and saves time over creating new series.

Analytical skills based on content knowledge; comfortable with using EAD.

Analytical skills, management skills, writing skills, computer literacy.

Attention to detail with awareness of whole scope of the project, self-motivation, ability to place materials in context at micro and macro level, range of technical skills from encoding to digitization.

Attention to detail, wide general knowledge, languages.

Attention to detail; ability to organize workflow; XML/EAD skill; ability to think about how researchers might be using the archive.

Attention to detail; computer & software experience; research skills; writing skills; organization skills

Attention to detail; languages; organizational skills; intellectual curiosity; knowledge about the collections.

Awareness of emerging technologies and computer languages (i.e., DACS, XML, and EAD related programs), remaining current with the archival profession through workshops, basic research skills and familiarity with standard and non-standard reference sources, and the ability to multitask and complete projects.

Basic archival education and training. Experience with descriptive standards (i.e., Rules for Archival Description). Practical hands on experience.

Basic archival knowledge. Knowledge of how reference in an archives works. Knowledge of various types of software and possibilities for electronic/digital areas.

Beyond the basic skills that all archivists should have that are detailed in books by SAA, I believe that description is critical, and having digital skills in your toolkit. That could be EAD creation or identifying collections that would be best accessed digitally. We all want as much of our collections accessed and digitally would be great, but the reality is we have to make decisions about how to best serve our institutions and researchers right now. Archivists today need digital skills.

Careful attention to detail.

Common sense, which is innate. An intellectual awareness of current research and research needs. Ability to work alone and find joy in being a glorified file clerk. Respect pattern and established practices rather than idiosyncratic arrangement and description schemes.

Competent writing skills; familiarity with DACS; familiarity with EAD; familiarity with basics of processing theory and practice (the six volumes of SAA's "Archival Fundamentals Series II" are a good foundation); high comfort level with technology (important both as a tool and, increasingly, as an element of a collection). Beyond that, they should have the ability to identify patterns in a collection and enhance, not override them (which I guess is another way of saying "knowing when to adhere to or alter original order" ?); good organizational skills; good eye for detail; and lots of patience!

Consistency, accuracy, and attention to detail. We have different student assistants who working on processing so the staff member overseeing the process must maintain consistency in processing practices.

Coursework at an institution which offers extensive coursework in archival and manuscript processing and management and internships under experienced archivists and manuscript curators. Relevant subject background.

Critical thinking, problemsolving, attention to detail but able to see the bigger picture, technical writing, adaptability, ability to assess collection and appropriate level of organization and description for anticipated use, administrative needs, and preservation; formulating and implementing a processing plan; time management; knowledge of metadata standards; knowledge of conservation and preservation for archival collections.

Database and encoding skills.

Excellent organizational skills, understanding of archival principles, including arrangement and description. Self-motivation. Ability to communicate effectively.

Experience working with collections. This is accomplished through coursework in library school, where they learn and apply their knowledge of processing.

Formal archival education, including standard archival theory and practice.

Good decision-making skills.

Good judgment, computer skills, knowledge of history.

Good judgment. Ability to see the forests and the trees at the same time.

Graduate level education, training in archival fundamentals, patience, organization skills, ability to work with all levels of patrons and donors, database experience, encoding.

Historical context, analytical understanding of unpublished and aggregate material. DACS "principles" are a good summary of intellectual skills. Too much concentration in library schools on the physical entity—interns love boxing and foldering and need to have the intellectual and historical reinforced.

In the case of the Manuscript Division, knowledge of American history and culture combined with strong organizational and descriptive abilities that allow for the understanding of hierarchies and details in the context of thousands of collections, many of them massive. An ability to focus on the whole, weighing the context and significance of material while discerning significant details for dissemination online.

Judgment, patience, subject knowledge, and when to ask for help.

Knowing what not to do, especially in terms of appraisal decisions and conservation treatment. Also keeping MPLP in mind in terms of quick access to users.

Knowledge of accepted archival practices and standards, such as DACS and EAD; communication and writing; time and project management; digital assets management; preservation and handling of various formats.

Knowledge of processing standards, including DACS. An ability to apply appraisal principles to processing. The ability to make judgments about level of processing and descriptive information included.

Knowledge of Rules for Archival Description. Historical appreciation of archives. Good work habits.

Knowledge of the subject area(s) of the institution's primary collecting focus.

More knowledge about the art of creating a finding aid and contextualizing collections. Better holistic notions of how to creatively define series and less rote applications of a standard way. Stronger fundamentals in the area of archival theory and practice that can then be applied to any record type or format.

Native intellect, organizational ability, focus, commitment, attention to detail, writing ability.

Organization; writing; handling electronic formats; balancing desire for detailed thoroughness with the concept of "more product/less process"; patience.

Organizational skills, subject specialties, attentiveness to detail, foreign language skills.

Processing staff need to acquire an understanding of the basics of arrangement, a basic knowledge of conservation/preservation issues (including audiovisual), an understanding of the function of a finding aid, and knowledge of EAD.

Processors must understand the details but not be beholden to the details. They must be well organized and have good analytical skills.

Professional archivist training. Good organizational and writing skills. Research and subject training. Preservation training.

Project management skills, including the ability to set priorities and stick to them, manage time, work in teams, see a

project to completion. Ability to organize large amounts of information and to write clear descriptions. Ability to think creatively about how to arrange, describe, and preserve large amounts of material. Specialized knowledge of subjects and/or formats found in collections. If staff do not have this knowledge, the ability and initiative to acquire it would be needed.

Resilience, flexibility, and intelligence: processing is as much art as craft, and _somebody_ has got to see the big picture before launching themselves on the they myriad parts. In my experience, staff either have the instincts to be a useful processor or they don't. If they don't, doesn't matter how much "training" you throw at them: they still don't get the point.

Some level of subject knowledge and knowledge of the research process are essential to good processing. The technical aspects of processing can be trained fairly effectively. The most important skills needed are appraisal and description understanding and training.

Sound knowledge of archival practices and principles for all media.

Strong organizational skills, attention to detail, planning for project.

Subject and language expertise.

The art of arrangement and description, which includes the ability to assess quickly the organizational scheme of a collection; the ability to summarize the research value of a collection through a well-written scope and content note; and the ability to balance overview with detail when making decisions throughout the processing work.

The most important skills are curiosity about the origins and relationships of documents in collections, and understanding their context, an analytical ability to understand the hierarchical nature of collections, and some historical knowledge. In addition, an inclination to focus on the collection and its overall attributes rather than the intrinsic interest of individual documents is similarly important.

The most important skills include knowledge of historical context, research methodology, archival hierarchy, description standards, and concept of original order.

They need to understand the importance of creating minimal descriptions for everything acquired by the department. They also need to understand how to determine which level of description is appropriate to which part of the finding aid when they decided to fully process a collection. They also need to be able to apply DACS.

Training, dedication, expressed interest, and attention to detail.

Triage for tackling inherited backlogs; communication skills for persuading others that new approaches are needed to provide at least some level of access to all archival collections; skills in appraisal (and re-appraisal).

Understanding of concepts of provenance, original order, record series, and how to apply it in practice.

Understanding, analysis, ability to compare and contrast, research, synthesis, communication.

CHALLENGES OF MAKING PROCESSING DECISIONS

21. Please describe up to three challenges you have experienced (or anticipate experiencing) in making decisions for manuscript and archival collections in your unit/department/library. N=69

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
Adequate funding.	Adequate staffing levels.	Weighing available resources against patron demand on the one hand and archival standards on the other.
An ongoing challenge is trying to process collections with insufficient staff. Acquisitions continue, but staffing remains at unchanging levels. We utilize School of Information graduate students in Directed Field Experience projects and internships, but this also involves a teaching/learning environment which requires a time commitment from the Head of Archival Processing and Cataloging.	With an upcoming large-scale processing project (ca. 1,000 linear ft.), well thought out but difficult decisions will need to be made regarding the level of processing. The level will, most likely, vary from series to series while still striving to maintain an intelligible arrangement.	With no standards or “best practice” guidelines in place, it has been challenging to reformat, and find suitable digital storage space for, archival audiovisual material.
Availability of staff.	Availability of funding.	Space considerations.
Balancing competing demands and shifting priorities.	Addressing space constraints, especially for space to do the actual processing of large fonds/collections.	Address a historical lack of coordination and consistency of approach in making appraisal decisions.
Born digital material: We haven’t encountered it yet, but handling “born digital” items I’m sure will be a challenge for us, particularly as one of our collecting areas is contemporary American authors. Writers’ use of computers and word processing software, not to mention the proliferation of blogs, wikis, email, and other types of content, pose a huge challenge to the archival community.	Online content decisions: Users increasingly want and expect to access actual content (not just finding aids) online, and we are increasingly giving it to them. But institutions that can provide lots of online content may potentially “drown out” smaller/poorer institutions that can’t (e.g. Local historical societies). Related to this, our choices of what to digitize may — intentionally or not — privilege some collections over others and make nondigitized collections and items less visible or less attractive. (See for example “Does Google suppress controversy?” http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1111/1031)	Access tool selection: Shoving more and more information online is only as useful as the tools we provide to access it. The standard search-with-return-of-hit-list is great so far as it goes, but we need to explore more powerful and flexible tools that let us look at our collections in new ways; see for example, archivesz (http://www.archivesz.com/) or NNDB (http://mapper.nndb.com/) or our Elastic Lists prototype (http://library.syr.edu/digital/guides/elasticlists-EAD/binv3/index.html).

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
Building and acquiring staff and technical support for publishing accession records on the Web.	Balancing processing staffing and resources across seven archival repositories, five of which have backlogs.	Retaining sufficient curatorial staffing while the larger organization conducts furloughs and reductions in force, or transitions existing staff lines to digital library development. Curators are needed to provide descriptive metadata for the content.
Challenge of scarce resources and doing more with less.	Running out of space to store collections.	Challenge of digital preservation.
Challenging the way it's always been done. The operation I took over was mired in 40+ years of no change. Layers and layers and layers of "sameness" infected the entire unit. So MPLP not only spurred questions, but outright hostility. "Patrons won't like it." "This is the way we've always done it." "This is absolutely impossible!" With an 8 mile backlog staring me in the face I had little choice but to rip off the band aid and make it happen. Bottom line: Patrons love it. THIS is the way you do things now. 1/2 miles processed in one fiscal year. You just can't rationally argue with success like this.	The speed and quality of processing spiked so dramatically, that those overseeing finances in administration wanted to know why all of a sudden we need an order of 50,000 folders; why we ordered 1,000 boxes multiple times each year. This spike in productivity impacted every other unit in the library: grants, binding, digital—their work was increasingly exponentially because we were suddenly on the move. We were no longer the dead books and manuscripts department processing 9 feet a month—we were a productive and vital unit that was open for business and ready to make a mark on the world.	Space. Manhattan. Until I worked in Manhattan I couldn't appreciate the scores of space jokes I had heard over the years. Butler library was built in 1932 with stacks that hold up the building that were made for books, not archives. 2/3 of our collections live offsite. Accessions come in, have to be surveyed, and sent offsite. Whole collections are processed and the archivists never seen them in their entirety. It's a 3-D chess game. Also staff space is limited; so we've had to be creative, offices are shared, and even a section of the stacks was emptied and is now devoted to processing space.
Choosing which collections to digitize, should it be based on patron demand, or on the need to preserve at-risk collections?		
Currently, my biggest challenge is having the curator of manuscripts be a part of the acquisition process from as close to the first step as possible. Colleagues/bibliographers are foolish simply to "dump" manuscripts on manuscripts staff without first getting their evaluation of the material and getting them invested and thinking about processing strategies from the get-go.	Too little staff and staff space for the 5,000+ linear feet of backlog and 100+ linear feet of growth per year.	Processing grants are getting harder and harder to receive as agencies such as the NEH look for model projects and/or digital projects and/or collaborative projects.

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
Dealing with subject curators who refuse to look at the big picture and insist on using traditional methods to arrange and describe collections and who revise finding aids more for style than content.	Finding all the disparate pieces of collections that have been shelved in different locations by size and format.	Lack of staff experience in processing collections.
Delivery of the EAD and extension of the workflow from initial processor to final output of the descriptive work.	The challenge of using non-professional staff for the bulk of processing and the consequential need to be available for regular intervention throughout the decision-making steps of processing.	Planning complex collection management for physical storage of collections in tandem with supervising daily processing and pushing EAD output.
Demand from our public for more and better access to our collections.	Technological challenges and opportunities will affect our decision-making regarding collection processing.	Resource allocation will determine levels of future processing. We also need to adopt the "More Product, Less Product" approach to our activities.
Due to lack of human resources, collections are prioritized for processing based on institutional priorities, research value, etc. but ultimately we process what we can with available staffing.	For processing electronic manuscript materials, we currently do not have the resources to deal well with this. Processing electronic materials is important so they do not get destroyed.	Inappropriately involved donors sometimes feel their materials should be described at the item level or indexed when their papers do not really warrant it, they also do not provide financial support for the staff to carry out such a project.
Electronic records for institutional archives.	Staff shortages due to budget shortfalls of last 4–5 years. As a federal institution we cannot obtain external funding to hire staff or otherwise outsource, so we rely on appropriated funds for all activities.	Added pressure to digitize or participate in other activities takes away from core processing operations. Perhaps we try to accomplish too much.
Establishing processing priorities when the number of high priority collections far exceeds the amount of available staff time.	Being prepared to support the increased access which can result from the availability on the Web of detailed finding aids for fully processed collections.	Making the most appropriate processing decision for a collection, which includes the recognition that access may never be enhanced for a collection which has been given minimal processing and that any level of processing becomes doubtful if a collection remains in the backlog for more than five years.
Finding staff able to look beyond detail and understand the big picture of a series.	Staff who are unwilling to let go of textbook answers on physical condition of materials. If Don Rumsfeld were an archival administrator he would probably say, "Stuff does not last forever."	
Funding for processing staff, supplies, and storage of collections.	Balance of size/level of acquisition and capacity to process (other demands on staff time).	Space.

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
Funding, mainly related to staffing and training.	Archival management of electronic records.	Acquisition and maintenance of archival storage space for collection materials.
Getting all of the archivists to follow the same set of procedures.	Backlog.	Migrating all of our collection data into AT.
Getting everyone to understand the concept of levels in fully processing collections.	Our inability to process everything at the item-level and the growing expectation that things will be processed at the item-level and that digital surrogates will also be available.	Accurate application of DACS.
Grant money needed but not flexible in matching processing priorities.	Large collections make it more challenging or sometimes impossible to use interns, students.	Realistic ways of handling electronic resources, technical skills in transferring and description, naming conventions for repositories.
Great volume of recently received material.	Great volume of older backlog.	Availability of staff and staff time.
Having enough staff to devote to processing new collections in addition to serving patrons and keeping up with the influx of new accessions to existing collections.	Implementing EAD.	Selecting a new software for collection management.
How to handle sensitive materials.	How to handle born-digital materials.	How to implement program of digitization of whole collections in a reasonable, smart, and sustainable way.
In our case, discerning the appropriate roles for the heads of our custodial units (University Archives, HCLA, and Rare Books/Manuscripts), vis-a-vis our Processing Coordinator, has been a challenge.	Correctly anticipating the research value of any given collection relative to what level of descriptive detail will provide adequate access to a collection is an ongoing challenge.	Recruiting/retaining staff with an ability to do descriptive work. Many staff find it a chore and dislike it, and finding those who have an instinct/ability for this sort of work makes them valuable indeed.
Increasing volume of acquisitions from private donors and university offices in all formats and media,	Decreasing no. Of staff to manage new and existing holdings,	Access to and preservation of born digital archival materials created by private donors and university offices,
Insufficient staff devoted to manuscript and archival processing,	Huge and increasing volume of gift-in-kind donations of manuscripts and archival material which lead to ever growing backlogs,	Unrealistic donor expectations re processing timelines,
Insufficient staff to make inroads into an ever-increasing backlog,	Inability to process certain collections due to lack of language skills on the part of the processing staff,	

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
It is difficult not to feel discouraged and overwhelmed by a backlog that grows each year. I am very interested in new tools and approaches for turning this around. I hope that big backlogs will become less accepted, and, even better, that we will substantially reduce them in the fairly near future.	Poor recordkeeping, especially documentation of ownership and appraisal decisions, is a daily challenge.	Anticipating the long-term consequences for myself, present colleagues, and successors, of my decisions is another major challenge. I learn each day by living with the consequences of decisions made by my own colleagues and predecessors, which helps, but this is very difficult. I try to compensate by making one radical departure from past practice: I strive to document my decisions, to make it easier for successors to understand them, and modify them in the future if necessary.
Lack of adequate funding.	Student assistants cannot sometimes finish processing project before needing to leave the job due to graduation or other circumstances.	Lack of adequate space (stack space and processing space).
Lack of enough staff who are knowledgeable about archival processing.	Lack of funding for archival supplies (preservation supplies).	Lack of space for growth of collections.
Lack of information about collections in the backlog to be able to make processing priority decisions. Some collections have been in the backlog for 30+ years. The control folder may or may not contain any clue as to what the collection contains or the topics it addresses, and even if it does, since our accessioning and processing database only began about 15 years ago, any "browsing" of accession description requires physically reviewing each folder. Further, the quality and quantity of information about an accession in the database varies widely. In general, not having a good handle on the size, character, and content of our backlog.	Need more people to process and space for them and collections.	Uncertain legal status of some collections— indefinite loans and deposits that have been here 50+ years, for example. Spend time processing something we don't "technically" own?
Lack of staff.	Space for processing and housing collections.	Moving to an automated on-line system of processing collections and creating EADS.
Large political archives continue to be an issue due to the space requirements, restrictions on use, and cost for processing.	Access to and preservation of born digital materials are presenting increasing challenges.	Preservation costs.

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
Level of processing to implement	Processing Electronic records	
Limited human resources for the volume of material to be processed.	Limited space for processing.	Handling digital formats and/or older electronic data.
Limited staff is the number one challenge. We simply don't have enough people to do the required processing. More donors are offering to donate money to pay for student processing which is one way to ensure more timely processing.	Slower turnaround time. Few staff/ student assistants to process means slower turnaround time, bigger backlog and greater need for appropriate prioritizing.	Cost of preservation for damaged collections or different formats can be an obstacle.
Limited staff resources.	Competing processing priorities. There are four major collection areas but only one processing dept. Deciding what gets done first requires frequent communication with the curators.	Timely receipt of: accession paperwork (e.g. Deed of gift), questions from processing staff about how curators want the collections processed, and timely review of the final EAD.
Locating grant funding for digitization projects.	Integrating students and part-time para-professionals into processing work-flow.	Determining cost effective solutions for preparing collections processed prior to 1970 for digitization.
Maintaining priority of public service and instruction. Although we are proud that this is our core mission and highest priority, it makes it challenging to put higher priority on processing and cataloging and, obviously, the two functions go hand in hand.	Digitization. The expectation that we will or should digitize our collections and the mandate to complete a major digitization project does take time and energy away from processing. It's not a trade-off that I'm very comfortable making as I feel that processing first is more important in serving our users' needs.	Donor expectations. Although we are careful not to make promises about how soon or when we might complete processing, there is a huge amount of donor pressure to not only process immediately, but also to digitize the collections they've donated (see Challenge 2).
Making a commitment to process to the folder level, and then after it was finished, to decide that series level would have been sufficient.		
Minimal staffing.	Accumulated backlog.	
Minimizing the time given to processing and producing worthwhile finding aids at adequate levels.	Developing staff expertise to process and preserve electronic formats.	Accepting new materials while reducing backlogs.
Negotiations with donors over terms of acquisition and access to collections, especially in cases where some parts may need to be closed for a certain period of time. The challenge is how to process effectively to identify the problem areas of the collection.	Weeding collections — deciding what to keep, and hence what needs to be processed.	Staffing — recruiting and retaining appropriate levels of staff, especially in times of budget crunches when the significance of Special Collections is not always apparent to library and university administration.

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
Not enough staff compared to backlogs.	No content management system for photographic holdings.	Likely budget cuts impacting staff and archival supplies.
One challenge is deciding on physical vs. Intellectual arrangement of a collection when materials are made with a variety of media and deviate significantly in size.	Another challenge is deciding to what level we will process a collection. We understand the value of "More Product, Less Process." We do use this theory as we process some collections. However, we feel we need to spend more time and process some collections in more detail to make them more usable for patrons. This is a fine line and we find it challenging to make the decisions.	Some collections come with archival issues attached. For instance, a collection that might otherwise assume lesser importance may be moved up in the queue for preservation reasons.
Overcoming traditions and past institutional practices that hinder the development of new directions and workflows.	Electronic media, reformatting, and remaining current on technology.	Recovering or searching for documentation on collections, such as Deeds of Gift.
Overwhelmed and overworked staff.	Pre-appraisal needs for backlogged collections.	Storage needs for current collection levels.
Preservation issues—what to do with endangered materials or obsolete formats.	Electronic records—how to make them accessible for current and future researchers.	Digitization—balancing processing materials with the demand for digital copies.
Resources and staffing dedicated to processing.	In approximately 3 years or so we will be moving into a new special collections building, so inventorying, organizing and preparing collections for the move is a challenge at the moment.	Currently, space limitations is a major problem and requires us to disperse our collections to multiple locations; this should be resolved in several years with the completion of our new building.
Retrofitting hundreds of finding aids created generations ago so they can be encoded online in EAD, a task that potentially involves physical reworking of collections and for this reason and others slows the processing of a growing backlog of unprocessed material.	Coping with the backlog of unprocessed material by resorting to minimal or lower-level processing of some collections or parts of collections.	Stabilizing, migrating, describing, and maintaining born-digital collection material, the new frontier portending major changes in the method and prioritizing of manuscript processing.
Severely unorganized collections.	Need for staff with special skills to process manuscript and archival collections.	Difficulty to estimate the future use of some collections.
Space, staff.	Volume of backlog.	Knowledge of foreign language and subjects the staff are unfamiliar.
Staffing.	Funding.	Collaboration.

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
Staffing is low and getting much lower. Student assistants and even FTE are being reduced for all departments due to institutional funding.	The turn-around time for having either some level of processing or familiarity with a collection is declining as the rate of reference use increases. Development and promotional use of archival materials often require collections to be user ready soon after they are accessioned and listed as summary descriptions on the Web site.	Newly trained library and information school graduates have much theoretical sophistication and knowledge but less ability to apply theory to actual practice than earlier generations of new professionals. New graduates need a better knowledge of general historical method and the substance of history that was commanded by earlier generations of starting archivists and manuscript curators.
Staffing issues. The level of staffing impacts how much is processed each year and the degree to which we prepare collections for use. Staff turnover impacts the ability to process complex, large collections. It takes a long time to train a skilled processor. Or if outsourcing the work, it still requires expert staff to check for quality control and handle coordination.	Funding. We regularly ask donors to provide funding for processing as part of the acceptance of large collection gifts. We also actively seek external funding that will help to support the staffing, supplies, or digitization needed to process important collections and to make them accessible to users.	Media obsolescence. We lack the equipment to transfer or read older forms of magnetic and electronic media.
Staffing level.	Influx of material.	Supplies and budget constraints.
Staffing levels.	Growth of backlog.	Lack of physical storage and work space.
Staffing, the economic downturn is effecting the state budget.	Time.	Financial resources.
Staffing: we do not have a dedicated manuscript/archive processor. The person who does the most processing—the assistant curator of manuscripts—has many other responsibilities.		
Staffing. We have a very large collection of over 100,000 items and a staff of 4.5 FTE. This makes doing everything we need to do a challenge every single day. We rely heavily on student assistants.	Money to continue digitizing and to keep refreshing already created digital content. This makes the pressure for grant seeking very high.	Preservation of endangered moving image and sound items in our collection. We have a small budget for preservation that pays for some chemical preservation of our film collections and lab transfers for some audio and video collections. We have 4 freezers that are almost completely full with films that are suffering from vinegar syndrome that need preservation attention. This is an extension of challenge 2 — money.

Challenge 1:	Challenge 2:	Challenge 3:
Tension between needs of researchers and ability of staff to arrange and describe increasingly larger and more complex collections.	Reconciling archival description with the requirements of digitization metadata needs.	Anticipating how Web 2.0 technologies might be leveraged to assist in providing greater access to archival materials, while doing so in a controlled environment.
The biggest challenge is to find processing time while we're dealing with a surge of patrons. Reference services are consuming now a great deal of our time.	Another challenge is weighing the processing of partially closed, institutional records (limited use, but important to our host institution) against more widely-opened but less important materials.	
The size of the archives.	The number of donations of archives.	Complexity of the fonds or collection and its order.
We are beginning to receive collections of materials primarily in digital formats. Although we have implemented procedures for flexible, efficient processing of large twentieth-century collections, the born-digital material threatens to send us back to item-level processing. We need to develop tools and procedures that will let us identify, preserve, and provide access to digital files without having to address individual files on a server, CD, DVD, or other medium.	Our current processing efforts are focused on providing better storage and access for architectural collections. We are applying principles of flexible, efficient processing to these fragile and oversize materials as well as to other 20th-century collections we hold. Our most valuable collections merit storage in flat files, but we need alternatives that make more efficient use of space while still allowing good access for other collections.	We have made the decisions that it is important to have at least minimal descriptive information available about all of our collections. For this reason, we have been working to develop tools and workflows that will allow our processing to keep up with our acquisitions and allow us to address our backlog. We are currently developing a workflow that allows for minimal processing at the point of accessioning.
We have a very small staff, and we're probably going to lose a position due to budget cuts. Part of that position would be processing, EAD guides, etc.	We've been developing more content of our own, e.g., Web sites on specific topics, so we're having to balance that type of work versus more traditional processing work.	
We want increasingly, and are under pressure, to offer digital surrogates at the item level. This involves many challenges — of format, of copy and other rights, of metadata creation and entry.		
What level should a collection be processed.	Which collections should be processed out of massive backlogs.	Having the right staff to process collections.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

22. Please enter any additional information regarding manuscript and archival collection processing policies and practices in your unit/department/library that may assist the authors in accurately analyzing the results of this survey. N=28

All processing decisions in any repository are based much more on local realities than on any other factors. Every repository must determine its own policies and practices based on the local administrative structure, budgetary process, staffing levels, and range and size of user demand.

Almost all of our processing is done by undergraduate or graduate students or by interns in graduate archives courses. It is always necessary to assess the abilities of the students and their readiness for a particular processing project.

Charles Lee, former head of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, once noted that the essential function of description was to “enumerate the attributes” of collections. Identifying those attributes, finding the proper level of detail, and talented staff to record them is a terrific, continuing struggle, and one of the reasons that such material has lagged in terms of description for access. Perhaps the only area where the need is more acute is in the area of AV materials.

For further information, please contact the respective department head: University Archives: Christopher Hives, University Archivist, chris.hives@ubc.ca; Rare Books & Special Collections: Ralph Stanton, Head, ralph.stanton@ubc.ca.

I would say our processing prioritization and process itself is definitely not a science!

In 2008, the Kelvin Smith Library created the position of Archivist in Special Collections. At that time a number of initiatives were begun, including those mentioned on p. 11 of this survey and an ongoing project to update in-house processing procedures for non-book material. While we do not have documents to share outside the library, we would like to share that the policies and practices of the department, developed over the course of 30 years, have been rooted in the tradition of the Archival Fundamental Series, published by the Society of American Archivists. Because there are many different types of materials and collections in the department a detailed description of our many and varied processing project is not feasible for this study. May it suffice that rare and unique items are most likely to be described at the item level; collections of personal papers and institutional archives are most likely to be described at the folder and series level; all collections are described at the collection level. Lastly, Special Collections does not operate with a back-log of unprocessed materials – processing donations of manuscript and non-book material is the first priority of the Archivist in Special Collections. The department does not solicit donations nor is it obligated to accept donations that fall outside its areas of specialization ensuring that this policy will remain practicable through time.

In 21 years at Penn, I can attest that the more online description available, the more use of manuscripts by researchers. An exceedingly minimal level of description will get some researchers in but will leave uninformed many potential researchers—researchers not searching the person for whom the collection is named but perhaps a correspondent in that collection.

In adopting MPLP you absolutely need standardized policy and procedure. With tiered processing there's no “one way” to do it anymore. We do it four ways and sometimes get creative on the fly to meet the needs of our patron base and of the unit. And, honestly, rip off the band aid. You can't “ease into” MPLP. You need to embrace it, commit to it, and mean it.

In general, we think the survey is nicely archival in outlook (not always the case). We had some problems with some part of the the survey seeming to want answers based on having made decisions about what we always do with certain types of materials or certain types of collections. We've really gotten away from that here, preferring triage

based on analyzing up front what's required by a given collection (or parts thereof) for anticipated use and proceeding accordingly.

Lack of permanent staff dedicated to processing, make it hard to be effective in dealing with backlog.

Our department has gone through a number of changes in the last year, reorganization and turnover in staff, including a new department head, and plans for a physical move of the library. Currently, our faculty position ,which should oversee manuscript processing, is vacant. Our Archivist position is also vacant.

Our Department has made a concerted effort to focus on processing collections during the past 5 1/2 years. 1.5 staff members dedicated to processing have processed 106 collections in the past 5 1/2 years. We have box lists created for all of our collections, make records for most of our collections and a Web guide that lists all of our manuscript collections. We find many patrons discover our collections through Web guide entries via Google searching.

Our responses reflect priorities as they actually play out. We may formally identify a particular collection as "top priority" for processing but a lower priority collection may get attention first because it is suitable for an intern to work with, is smaller, or other.

See our Web site at www.utoronto.library/utarms for more information.

Since 1986, the Manuscript Unit in the University of Delaware Library Special Collection Department has grown from one professional manuscript librarian and one support staff who assisted with processing, to three professional manuscript librarians, three support staff, and three .5 FTE graduate assistants. After nearly 15 years of HTML finding aids as chief access tools to manuscript collections, EAD xml is being used for XHTML, PDF, and MARC output (as well as Dublin Core for current digital collection projects). Arrangement tasks of processing are challenged by the need for stronger, independent decision-making skills and experience levels of non-professional staff. The supervising librarian is stretched with responsibility for overseeing junior professional staff in developing processing skills and overseeing a second librarian establishing EAD and DACS standards. Description tasks are progressing but are dependent on the Library Systems Department which has its own priorities and pressing schedules. The 'enlightened vision' of a powerful federated search engine that will harvest the universe of Encoded Archival Description is critical to the justification of all this hard work. EAD is more than 10 years old. Applying descriptive standards is an integral part of processing, but the process has become a bottleneck without easier exploitation of all this powerful metadata. In addition to the need for universal federated searching, there is a great need for integrated acquisition/description/circulation modules such as the developing Archival Toolkit or Aeon system. These tools will help processing become a less isolated step in collection management.

Since these collections all are unique, so much depends on the specific situation. For us, processing tends to be fluid — we may do it minimally, then go back and do it more fully if demand or preservation needs warrant it. For most collections, we try to do it minimally as soon after acquisition as possible, following the Meissner/Greene mantra of more product/less process(ing).

Student assistants are hired to process collections. We are heavily dependent on students, especially work study students.

The acquisition of manuscripts and archival material is over 80% by donation and this factor puts immense pressure on processing practices.

The years 2006–2008 have been a time of change and growth within the Special Collections Research Center. In 2005, the Center initiated and in 2006 completed a project of converting dated finding aids into online EAD documents, more than tripling the total number of online guides to collections. We have very few collections for which there are no catalog records or finding aids online. We estimate that about 20% of our total collections need further processing

in order to be used effectively by researchers. Over the three-year period, processing priorities have been refocused to be in line with the collecting priorities of the Special Collections program, with a particular emphasis on areas such as architecture, plant genetics and genomics, and history of computing. We have worked to integrate processing and description efforts for general, special, and digital collections. Processing priorities have also been adjusted to improve storage conditions for collections at risk and to make more efficient use of storage. Additionally, we have supported enhanced access to collections needed for exhibits or other special events, such as departmental anniversary celebrations. Improvements and streamlined processing procedures resulted in a wealth of new collections being made available to researchers. Increased access is the direct result of a concerted effort to undertake arrangement adequate to make the collection usable; description at a level sufficient to facilitate use; and minimal physical preservation. Processing staff focused on getting more collections into the hands of users by generating appropriately concise, high-quality access tools.

This department has experienced a large amount of change in the past few years (staff, collections, physical space, and autonomy) and those recent changes have greatly affected the answers to this survey. Like most ARL Special Collections departments we have more collections and obligations than our staff size can easily handle, but we are able to make great progress on a project-by-project basis.

This survey was completed by the acting department head who is a librarian and not an archivist based on input from two archivists and one support staff member.

Those who process range from full-time faculty, professional staff, temporary staff, and students — many of whom have completely different ideas on how deeply a collection should be processed. At the moment we are taking a strategic approach to integrating all collection data into one content management system, then prioritizing the backlog, and working more collaboratively within the archives. It has been very separate in the past — Manuscripts, AV, Public Policy, and University Archives. It is my goal to make us work together as the Archives.

Use of processing standards such as RAD.

We are in a time of transition with changes in personnel as well as philosophical changes regarding the processing, access, and use of the collections.

We have been doing very little other than minimal processing for several years and I don't see that changing.

We have just recently started to implement a limited MPLP project. We think that this project will provide us with further impetus to better delineate processing priorities and levels of processing for all collections.

We will be transitioning to the Archivists' Toolkit in the next year or so but the AT product has some serious deficiencies (e.g., reporting and workflow sequence) that will make the change quite disruptive.

Western Archives is currently in a state of transition as a result of a functional review that realigned responsibilities and reformed practices. A new Archives and Special Collections team is consolidating and coordinating activities and new archives management software is being implemented.

RESPONDING INSTITUTIONS

Arizona State University	University of Missouri
Boston College	University of Nebraska—Lincoln
Brigham Young University	University of New Mexico
University of British Columbia	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Brown University	North Carolina State University
University at Buffalo, SUNY	Northwestern University
University of California, Davis	Ohio University
University of California, Irvine	Ohio State University
University of California, San Diego	University of Oklahoma
University of California, Santa Barbara	Oklahoma State University
Case Western Reserve University	University of Oregon
University of Chicago	University of Pennsylvania
Columbia University	Pennsylvania State University
University of Connecticut	Purdue University
University of Delaware	University of Rochester
Duke University	Rutgers University
Emory University	Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Georgetown University	Syracuse University
University of Georgia	University of Tennessee
University of Hawaii at Manoa	University of Texas at Austin
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Texas A&M University
Indiana University Bloomington	University of Toronto
University of Iowa	University of Utah
Iowa State University	Vanderbilt University
Johns Hopkins University	University of Virginia
University of Kansas	Virginia Tech
Kent State University	University of Washington
University of Kentucky	Washington State University
Louisiana State University	Washington University in St. Louis
University of Louisville	University of Waterloo
McMaster University	University of Western Ontario
University of Manitoba	University of Wisconsin—Madison
University of Massachusetts, Amherst	Library of Congress
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	National Library of Medicine
University of Michigan	Smithsonian Institution
Michigan State University	



REPRESENTATIVE DOCUMENTS

Job Description of Processing Decision Maker

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Number _____
Dates Reviewed by Committee _____

POSITION TITLE: Head of Archival Processing and Cataloging, and Curator of the Transportation History Collection

UNIT: Special Collections Library

SUPERVISOR: Head, Special Collections

Position Summary: The Head of Archival Processing and Cataloging, and Curator of the Transportation History Collection in the Special Collections Library is responsible for overseeing the accessioning and processing of archival and non-book collections as well as for collection development and management, public service, outreach, and access activities related to the Transportation History Collection. The prime subject area of curatorial responsibility is transportation history before 1900, particularly the areas in which the University of Michigan are strongest, including railroad history, the organization and administration of early highways, the economic and social ties between the settlement of the United States and the growth of a transportation infrastructure, and design work for style and functionality in transportation. The Curator plays a leadership role in activities having to do with these parts of the collections, ranging from working with donors to answering reference queries and mounting exhibits. This position is also responsible for technical coordination and creation and updating of the SCL website.

PRIMARY DUTIES OF THIS POSITION

Accessioning and Processing: 40%

Oversees accessioning and processing of all non-book material in the Special Collections Library. Responsible for having all new non-book collections that come to the department accessioned. Ensures that collections are organized in accordance with accepted archival principles and that intellectual control over the collections is established through the preparation of finding aids. With the processors, identifies and documents the preservation needs of the collections. Develops policies for establishing physical and intellectual control over the materials. Establishes priority for processing in consultation with Special Collections curators. Regularly consults with Special Collections curators regarding the organization of particular collections and the creation of finding aids. Remains up to date with new practices and policies of accessioning and processing collections formulated by the Society of American Archivists and member organizations.

Hires, trains, and supervises 1.0 FTE librarian, .5 FTE P&A staff, and up to four student workers or interns per term. Trains supervisees to check in, organize, and write finding aids for collections.

Cataloging: 20%

Responsible for original cataloging of all non-book materials in the Special Collections Library. These materials include photograph, manuscript, pamphlet, poster, print, art work, realia, theatre program, and playbill collections. Catalogs at the collection level and or item level according to AACR2, ISBD punctuation, and accepted subject thesauri in MARC formats. Responsible for remaining current with new cataloging practices established by the Library of Congress and Technical Services, UM Library. Develops and maintains an awareness of policies on cataloging collections developed by other relevant organizations in the library, archives, and museum fields. Proposes cataloging policies in consultation to the Assistant Head of Special Collections and consults with representatives from Technical Services. Regularly confers with Special Collections Curators regarding the cataloging of particular collections. Hires, trains, and supervises student interns who want to learn how to catalog manuscript, archival, and non-book material. Represents the Special Collections Library on Technical Services committees and taskforces concerning cataloging.

Collection Development: 20%

Responsible for developing and managing the collections in the assigned subject areas. Collection development will involve intense work with dealers and collectors/donors, as well as with the corresponding selectors for the general collections. Most purchases are retrospective, although some parts of the Transportation History Collection include current serials and monographs. All appropriate formats are collected, following drafted policy, including books, serials, manuscripts, archives, pamphlets, and non-book materials such as photographs and posters. Collects materials in all appropriate European languages. Identifies prospective donors of appropriate material and frequently initiates contact and works closely with them. Seeks consultation when appropriate with the Head of the Special Collections Library and with the Library Development Office when approaching donors, and consults with the curatorial team in Special Collections when acquiring particularly large, expensive, or complex collections. Works with library selectors and faculty across the University who have identified donors whose materials would become part of the Transportation History Collection. Uses professional judgment to weigh benefits of potential gifts against costs in space and staff time, consulting others as appropriate. Works with staff of the Preservation Office and Conservation Laboratory to find solutions to difficult technical problems regarding the preservation and restoration of many different kinds of materials and formats. Works with Head of Special Collections in preparing collection development budget requests. Monitors the portion of the collection development budget assigned to Transportation History materials. Implements collection development policy statements, rewriting or adding details as needed.

Public Service & Outreach: 20%

Because so many areas in the Special Collections Library are uncataloged or under-cataloged, the curators bear a significant responsibility to interpret the collection to patrons. This frequently takes the form of lengthy reference consultations, exchanges of reference letters (both paper and email), and telephone calls. Advises on research questions and problems for patrons in-person and by phone, letter, and e-mail. Answers reference queries in person and by phone, letter, and e-mail. Searches appropriate local and national databases as appropriate for patrons' needs. Works as monitor of the Reading Room for a two-hour shift per week, plus occasional Saturday shifts.

As part of the development and educational missions of the University Library, gives lectures to the general public as requested on holdings of the Special Collections Library, with audiences ranging from school children to senior citizens. Initiates publicity for all events and

major acquisitions involving the subject with which he/she works. Initiates contacts with faculty at the University of Michigan in subject areas related to their curatorial responsibilities. Keeps faculty informed of our activities in the area. Offers and gives lectures, tours, and classes in conjunction with appropriate courses. Offers research support for students and faculty, including appointments to plan research strategies. Stays aware of changes in research focus in appropriate areas. Seeks faculty input regarding collecting policy.

QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

1. Master's degree from an ALA accredited library school.
2. Strong skills in organizing information of all kinds.
3. Three years of professional experience working with manuscripts, archives, photographs, or other special materials in a research library.
4. Knowledge of modern manuscript and archival theory and practices.
5. Knowledge of MARC formats, particularly AMC.
6. Experience working with rare books, manuscripts, or special collections in transportation history.

Desirable:

1. Knowledge of AACR2, ISBD punctuation, and Library of Congress subject headings.
2. Working knowledge of one western European language.
3. Experience as a selector, particularly in retrospective buying.
4. Knowledge of the care and preservation of historic materials.
5. Strong oral and written communication skills.

Desirable: Experience in instruction and/or in the provision of reference services. Ability to interact successfully with a wide variety of people of all ages with varying backgrounds, expectations, and educational levels.

Job Descriptions of Processing Staff

Manuscripts Processing Librarian (General Librarian)

The Manuscript Processing Librarian (1 FTE) works independently under the general supervision of the Curator of Manuscripts. The incumbent uses advanced technical knowledge and skills to formulate independent decisions based on both general and highly specialized library policies, procedures, and practices. The incumbent analyzes incoming acquisitions, accessions collections, creates essential management data and finding aids, and makes decisions about how the materials will be physically preserved. The incumbent arranges and describes manuscript collections and performs original cataloging, creating MARC-AMC records for manuscript collections. The incumbent is responsible for training and supervising one or more graduate assistants. The incumbent also provides training and supervision for other staff and student workers, as necessary, and participates in providing public services at Special Collections service points.

Specific responsibilities include:

- E 70% PROCESSING. Accessions manuscript materials, recording essential management information concerning the provenance and transfer of ownership to the LSU Libraries of donated and purchased materials. The incumbent assesses processing needs of newly acquired collections, determines the appropriate arrangement of materials within a collection, and organizes the work to be carried out, using independent judgment to interpret and apply archival principles and practices. The incumbent performs necessary historical research in order to properly describe the materials for scholarly use. The incumbent performs original cataloging, creating MARC-AMC records, which requires the application and interpretation of cataloging rules specific to archives and manuscripts in addition to AACR2rev., LCSH, etc.; collaborates in the development and revision of policies and procedures for processing collections.
- E 20% SUPERVISION. Trains, supervises, and evaluates one to three graduate assistants, selecting appropriate tasks and monitoring their work. Hires, trains, and supervises student workers who do basic process procedures and rehousing of manuscript collections. Trains other staff as necessary in accessioning and preservation tasks.
- E10% PUBLIC SERVICE AND OUTREACH. Performs advanced-level reference work to assist researchers in identifying and using Special Collections and other library materials. Interprets and enforces library policies for the security and administration of the collections. Works with donors to maintain positive donor relations.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- ALA-accredited MLS
- Significant experience in the appraisal, processing, and description of archival and manuscript materials.
- Comprehensive knowledge of archival theory, practice, and national and international standards and best practices that govern the arrangement and description of primary source materials, including *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*, the MARC 21 format, and appropriate thesauri & authority lists used for indexing archival descriptions.
- Familiarity with online research information resources and searching methodologies, and an understanding of the operation of common office productivity software applications.
- Strong commitment to technical services in support of public services.
- Excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication, and organizational skills.
- Ability and willingness to lift 30 pounds.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

- Knowledge of Louisiana and American history, particularly the American South, and related disciplines and research methodologies.
- Reading knowledge of French or Spanish.
- Knowledge of Encoded Archival Description.
- Experience providing reference service.



LIBRARIES

Processing and Public Services Archivist Archives and Special Collections

The Purdue University Libraries seeks an experienced archivist to oversee reference services and accessioning and processing of archival and manuscript collections.

Responsibilities: The Processing and Public Services Archivist arranges and describes archival materials in all formats; develops and documents processing plans for large collections and guidelines for levels of processing; ensures appropriate archival housing for collections; identifies and refers items as necessary for conservation treatment; prepares and edits finding aids and other descriptive access tools; participates in implementation of EAD for encoded finding aids; participates in the creation of MARC catalog records for manuscript and archival holdings. Trains and supervises the work of support staff and students who may be assigned to assist with arrangement and description of manuscript and archival collections; assigns tasks and monitors pace and direction of work by support staff; maintains schedules and deadlines; provides reference services and delegates reference inquiries to support staff as appropriate; evaluates staff performance. Provides instruction to classes in archival research methodology and provides orientation tours for groups visiting the Archives and Special Collections. Participates in unit-wide planning and committee activities and creating exhibits. May also assist in future development of records retention schedules and work with the University's colleges, schools, and departments on the transfer of historical material to the archives. Reports to the Head of Archives and Special Collections.

Requirements: Masters Degree in Library or Information Sciences from an ALA-accredited library school with a concentration in archival management or completion of significant graduate level course work in archives and at least two years experience arranging and describing archival collections in a historical or academic repository; familiarity with DACS, EAD, MARC, LCSH, AACR2, and other LC cataloging standards; familiarity with automated library information management systems, such as Endeavor/Voyager and online union catalogs such as RLIN or OCLC; knowledge of basic preservation and conservation standards for archival and manuscript collections; experience supervising staff in processing archival collections; demonstrated ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; excellent organizational skills, with demonstrated commitment to accuracy and attention to detail; experience providing reference services for archival materials; ability to work independently and collaboratively in a fast-paced, team environment; ability to work efficiently to meet project goals and deadlines; ability to establish and maintain professional and effective working relationships with colleagues, faculty, staff, students, donors, and the general public. Ability to lift records cartons which weigh up to 50 pounds. Experience using Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. Familiarity with current trends in archival theory and management, and records management in an academic setting. Strong commitment to the archives profession. Candidates should possess strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work cooperatively with a wide variety of constituents.

Desired Qualifications: Certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists is preferred. Familiarity with CONTENTdm or similar digital assets management systems preferred. Familiarity with digitization projects and archival standards and best practices relating to digital image capture and metadata creation preferred. Familiarity with HTML and Dreamweaver software for creating or editing web pages preferred. Knowledge of institutional repositories as they relate to archives work preferred. Experience managing and providing long-term access to electronic records and born digital content preferred. Experience providing library instruction preferred.

Salary: Minimum \$41,000 and up, depending upon qualifications.

Status and Benefits: Three year appointment as Visiting Assistant Professor of Library Science. Twelve month appointment with annual vacation of 22 working days. Excellent benefits including fully paid TIAA-CREF retirement contribution. Must have vested, employer-funded contract from previous Higher Education employment for participation.

Application Process: Applications will be reviewed beginning April 30, 2007 and will be accepted until a suitable candidate is chosen. Send statement of interest, resume, and a list of three references in both electronic format and by surface mail to: Thomas L. Haworth, Human Resources Administrator, Purdue University Libraries, 504 W. State St., West Lafayette, IN 47907-2058. thaworth@purdue.edu.

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fully committed to achieving a diverse workforce**

Processing Policy

Minimal Processing Policy

January 2009

All manuscript collections must be minimally processed before they can be fully processed.

Guidelines for Minimal Processing

1. Create series based on original order or corporate structure of the collection
 1. Do not create subseries structure
 2. Do not remove paper clips or weed materials
 3. Do not refolder, organize materials within folders, or organize folder order
- 1. Exception:** Unorganized collections
 1. If not in folders, sort materials into series structure and place in folders
 2. Write DACS-compliant titles and dates on new folders based on content
 3. Place series in carton
2. Create DACS-compliant finding aid for the collection in EAD

L. Tom Perry Special Collections Processing Plan Review Policy

30 January 2008

1. The L. Tom Perry Special Collections is committed to meeting national and local standards in the processing of manuscript collections. This involves compliance with the 90-day policy, minimal processing standards as set by the department, the CCLA EAD Best Practices Guide and the local implementation of *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*. In order to ensure that these standards are met processing plans will be completed for all collections and reviewed under the following circumstances:
 - a. Curators
 - i. Processing plans for collections over 25 linear feet will be:
 1. Reviewed and discussed with immediate supervisor
 2. Presented to the Board of Curators for consultation and discussion
 3. Reviewed and approved by the curator's immediate supervisor.
 - ii. Processing plans for high profile collections will be:
 1. Reviewed and discussed with immediate supervisor
 2. Presented to the Board of Curators for consultation and discussion
 3. Reviewed and approved by the curator's immediate supervisor.
 - b. Students/Interns/Volunteers/Paraprofessionals
 - i. All processing plans will be reviewed and approved by their immediate supervisor.

Processing Procedures Manuals

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE
Special Collections and Archives

Archival Processing Manual

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Best Practices Guide for Staff Archivists, Project Personnel, Interns, and Student Assistants

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Appendix I: Records and Personal Papers Appraisal Guidelines

Appendix II: Handling Procedures for Photographs and
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Appendix III: Preservation Photocopy Table

Appendix IV: Separation Form

Appendix V: Restriction Flag

Appendix VI: Tiered Processing Tables

Processing Worksheets

UK Archives Processing Worksheet

Collection Name: _____

Accession Number: _____

Donor: _____

Current Size of Collection: _____

Processor Name: _____

Date: _____

General survey of the collection

Briefly explain the organization of materials, conservation issues to be addressed, whether the materials are in folders/loose in boxes, and related issues to give an overview of the collection. Estimate processing time required.

Brief description: _____

Current Organization: _____

Conservation Issues (rusting staples, newspaper, etc.): _____

What types of materials are in the collection? Check all that apply. If any of the materials show any sign of deterioration indicate problem. i.e. brittle paper, insect damage, rust, etc.

Type of Material	Present	Preservation Problem
Papers		
Photographs		
Artifacts/Ephemera		
Computer discs		
Films		
Albums/Scrapbooks		
Printed Materials (Books, Journals, etc.)		
Newspaper/clippings		

General overview and comments on collection condition: _____

Timeframe to complete:

Proposed Processing Plan

Explain the steps/how you propose to organize/arrange or rearrange the collection, its descriptive level, physical conservation/repair/maintenance, material to transfer, and any other considerations to give an overview of the work to be performed.

Proposed level of arrangement:

Identified Series/Subseries:

Proposed level of description:

Separated Materials:

PROCESSING FORM

Creator: _____

Title: _____

Mss. #

Acc. #

Date received: _____

☐ OLAF updated

web date: _____

☐ Freezer:

Date in

/ out

Job type:

☐ Preliminary processing

☐ Full processing

☐ Rehousing only

☐ Addition to processed collection

☐ Addition to unprocessed collection

Finding aids/Cataloging:

☐ Container list made,

filename _____ ☐ filed

☐ Container list revised

☐ Full finding aid made,

filename _____ ☐ filed

☐ Full finding aid revised

☐ SIRSI record no. _____

Processed by: _____

Date: _____

Stack Location: _____

Shelved by: _____

Date: _____

(State as linear ft. and/or no. of items)

Size before processing: _____

Size after processing: _____

Dates: Inclusive

(bulk)

Types of items: _____

Notes, explanations, conservation needs, etc.: _____

Updates:

☐ Accession file ☐ Accession book ☐ Online catalog ☐ Finding aid ☐ Card catalog

☐ Vault list ☐ Vault database ☐ Email for subject guide

Supplies:

Boxes, containers, folders, sleeves, photo enclosures, etc. (state type and estimate number used)

Total hours worked on collection (if requested by supervisor): _____

Workplan DFE 690 (Fall 2005)

Processing the Duncan Perry Papers

Goal:

Appraisal 10%

While the student processes the archive, he will look for and remove those materials of a personal nature and/or those materials that document the administration of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, as stipulated by the donor, former Executive Director, Duncan Perry. The student will also deaccession duplicate items and serial or other publications that fall outside the scope of the collection and would better serve as individually cataloged items.

The student will also perform background research on Duncan Perry and the history of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in preparation for devising an appropriate arrangement and for content for the scope/content note in the finding aid.

In appraising the collection the student will learn how to define components of an archive and determine, within the scope of the donor agreement, which components make up the body and core of that specific archive.

To accomplish this goal the student will remove, after consulting the Special Collections Library's Head of Archival Processing and Cataloging and DFE mentor, Kathleen Dow, those materials outside the scope of the collection.

Goal

Arrangement 70%

Following basic archival principles of arrangement and local practices of the Special Collections Library, and paying close attention to the specific nature of the materials, the student will arrange the archive and properly house its materials in archivally sound folders and boxes. To accomplish this goal the student will work through a series of stages that proceeds from the general to the specific.

In arranging the archive the student will learn the principles of archival arrangement and apply those principles in a manner that facilitates the archive's use.

Kathleen Dow will evaluate this portion of the work experience on a regular basis and provide guidance at the practical level and offer her insight at the theoretical level.

Goal

Description 20%

After the archive has been arranged and housed, the student will then proceed to create a finding aid and a cataloging record. The student will create a finding aid using the Special Collections Library's template. The student will then catalog the archive using DACS, AACR2rev., LCSH, and AAT, in the MARC format for inputting into Mirlyn, the Aleph-based online database of the University of Michigan's library system. He will then encode the finding aid using the EAD DTD, which will then be loaded onto the Digital Library Production Services server and made available on the library's website.

In describing the archive the student will learn how to reflect the arrangement in the description. The student will also learn the technical aspects of encoding a finding aid and creating an archival MARC record.

After teaching the student how to use the encoding and delivery applications, Kathleen Dow will direct and supervise the process of description and evaluate performance based on accuracy and quality of work.

Steps for handling new collections

All tasks are done by manuscripts staff unless otherwise noted

- 1) Create accession record in database
- 2) Create collection record in database
- 3) Update tracking list with collection name, file name, etc
- 4) Create file cabinet folder
 - a) Printout of accession record
 - b) Copy of acquisition information
- 5) Inventory to required level
 - a) No listing at all; in step 6) use appropriate note (“An item-level inventory has not been created for this collection.”) to finding aid OR
 - b) Do quick and dirty box list; in step 6) use appropriate note (“The following is a simple BOX LIST. The collection has not yet been processed.”) to finding aid OR
 - c) Process physical collection and create complete inventory
- 6) EAD-ify
 - a) Create EAD record
 - i) **eadheader** section should be complete with subject headings
 - ii) Create **inventory** section to required level, converting from Word if needed and/or adding appropriate note from step 5) above
 - b) EAD => HTML (also creates printer-friendly version)
 - c) Check all names and subject headings using LC or AAT or similar
 - d) QA (KM)
 - e) Upload to website (Peter)
 - f) Move HTML files to appropriate subdir on L:\SCRC\digital\guides (me)
- 7) Create MARC record (EAD => MARC), update database with collection number
- 8) File hard copy finding aid as needed
 - a) file cabinet (1 copy)
 - b) reading room (1 copy)
 - c) collection (1 copy)
- 9) Determine physical location of collection (Bill/Nicolette)
- 10) Create cards for reading room files
 - a) Name index card(s) – MS staff
 - b) Locator card(s) – Bill

Steps for handling additions to collections

All tasks are done by manuscripts staff unless otherwise noted

- 1) Create accession record for new material in database and link to collection record
- 2) Update finding aids folder with printout of accession record, any other pertinent info
- 3) If new material is not being processed:
 - a) Label container with collection name and accession number
 - b) Find a place for it and update database with additional location if needed (Bill)
- 4) Update finding aid
 - a) Finding aid is not in EAD
 - i) Add “Additions made but not yet inventoried” note to hard copy OR
 - ii) Process and create full inventory of additions in Word
 - b) Finding aid is in EAD
 - i) Add “Additions made but not yet inventoried” note OR
 - ii) Update EAD file with complete list of new additions
 - iii) Add revision information to EAD file `revisiondesc` section at top
 - iv) Upload to website (Peter)
 - v) Move HTML files to appropriate subdir on L:\SCRC\digital\guides
- 5) Update MARC record if necessary
- 6) Print and distribute updated hard copies of finding aid
 - a) file cabinet (1 copy)
 - b) reading room (1 copy)
 - c) collection (1 copy)
- 7) Create/update cards for reading room files as needed
 - a) Name index card(s) – MS staff
 - b) Locator card(s) – Bill

Procedures for Prioritizing Processing

Backlog and Prioritizing Processing Project

Goals:

- Identify collections that have adequate description and arrangement in their present state (or will with minimal effort)
- Gather information to inform assigning processing priorities to the truly unprocessed collections (both in terms of level of processing and order to be processed).

Database: This will be based on the form “backlog project” in OLAF.¹

Fields:

- Describe existing arrangement and description
- Preservation issues--condition and housing
- Privacy issues
- Recommendation for additional processing:
 - Online record
 - Rekeying existing finding aid
 - Rehousing
 - Additional minimal processing
 - Additional full processing
 - Minimal processing from scratch
 - Full processing from scratch
- Fuller description of collection
- Processing priority level (see next page)

¹ The “new fields” for this project were inserted into the main table of OLAF, then a query was created to identify records in which the status is unprocessed or preliminarily processed. A form was then created that is linked to that form. When info is entered through this form, it is actually entered in the main table of OLAF. Do not delete a record without realizing you are deleting it from OLAF, not just the form, which represents the project.

Assigning Processing Priority

If a collection has materials that are criteria in one or more level (high, medium, or low) assign it the points for the highest rank (3, 2, or 1) that the bulk of the collection seems to fall into and add a ½ point for each specific criteria from the lower ranks.

- High (3 points--if collection meets one more of the following criteria)
 - Assign 1 additional point for each one of the following criteria met:
 - Additional materials from a family whose papers are already processed
 - Majority is 20th century
 - Topically relates to (1 point for each)
 - African Americans
 - civil rights or desegregation
 - coast or environment
 - education
 - immigrant groups
 - oil and gas exploration and extraction
 - race relations
 - sugar growing and industry
 - tourism, marketing and image of Louisiana
 - urban development, neighborhoods, or physical or built environment
 - women
 - Significant portion (one quarter or more) French language materials
 - Preservation concerns
 - Donor promises with expired or approaching processing deadlines
- Medium (2 points--if collection meets one or more of the following criteria)
 - Assign 1 additional point for each one of the following criteria met.
 - War-related collections
 - Plantation collections that do not include materials related to any of the topics in the higher priorities' criteria
 - Literary papers
- Low (1 point--if collection meets one or more of the following criteria)
 - Assign 1 additional point for each one of the following criteria met.
 - Faculty papers that do not include materials related to any of the topics in the higher priorities' criteria
 - Collections that do not meet any of the above criteria
 - Organizational records that do not include materials related to any of the topics in the higher priorities' criteria
 - Outside geographical focus of Louisiana and the Lower Mississippi Valley

Subtract a point for collections that are entirely photocopies or typescripts of originals we do not own.

Score:

Collection number(s): _____

1. Circulation statistics for past 5 years

- 1 = no retrievals
- 2 = 1-4 retrievals
- 3 = 5 or more retrievals

2. Photocopy requests for past years

- 1 = none
- 2 = 1-49 pages
- 3 = 50 pages or more

3. Existing processing/finding aids category.

- 1 = level 2-3
- 2 = level 4-5
- 3 = no finding aid

4. Value/Potential Use

- 1 = 1 CD policy attribute
- 2 = 2 CD policy attributes
- 3 = 3+ CD policy attributes

5. Condition

- Good
- Poor (+10 pts)

- 1 = 1950-2000
- 2 = 1900-1949
- 3 = pre-1899

6. Collection size

- 1 = 41 or more boxes
- 2 = 20-40 boxes
- 3 = 19 or less

7. External interest

- 1 = no interest
- 2 = some interest
- 3 = high interest

HMD suggested collection?

- Yes (+10 pts)
- No

**8. Primary source vs. secondary scholarship
(No= -5 pts)**

**9. Collections and archives of medical historians, the Library, professional associations
(Yes= -5 pts)**

10. Legal ownership

- Yes
- No (-10 pts)

11. Significant restrictions on materials

- Yes (-10 pts)
- No

Collecting Processing Statistics

**Archives & Special Collections (DRC)
Monthly Report**

2009

Administration

Meetings

Presentations/Events

Publications Utilizing our Collections (include publication name and collection)

Newly available Collections: (processing and EAD finding aid completed and linked)

Newly available EAD finding aids: (collection reprocessed/additions integrated and finding aid encoded)

Finding aids cataloged in HOMER:

New collections accessioned:

Additions to existing collections accessioned:

Cataloging:

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
Collections Assistant Monthly Report

Date:
To:
From:
Re: Collections Assistant monthly report

Clippings classified: # linear feet

Publications: #

RS Photo Processing:

Negatives: B & W _____ Color _____ Total _____
Prints: B & W _____ Color _____ Total _____
Transparencies: _____ Slides _____

Preservation

Items sent out:

Items returned:

Date out	Title	Call number	Date returned
----------	-------	-------------	---------------

Total items out::

Accessions

Manuscripts: accessions / linear feet

University Archives: accessions / linear feet

Other: accessions / linear feet

Total: accessions/ linear feet

Accession number	Collection number	Creator	Coll title	Date rec'd	Lin ft
------------------	-------------------	---------	------------	------------	--------

Reference:

Hours on desk: # ()

Email: ()

Mail: ()

Phone: ()

Scan requests:

Library contacts

Technical Services problem solving contacts:
Binding unit problem solving calls:
Items sent to be catalogued:
Items sent to be transferred:

Finding aid retro-conversions:

➤

Other statistics

Letters generated by accessions:
Deeds of Gifts:

Other projects

Sample Statistics Reports

Totals To-Date

Cumulative Figures				
Fiscal Year	Year End	'07/08	'08/09	'09/10
	06/07			
Archives & Special Collections	(based on 2007 survey)			
Reference Questions		751	412	0
Electronic Reference Questions		428	288	0
Total Reference Questions		1179	700	0
Titles/Volumes Cataloged		1782	1277	0
Volumes To Date		1,782	3,059	3,059
Additions (In Linear Feet)		742.35	618.4	0
Total Linear To Date		36,283.49	37,025.84	37,644.24
Additions to Multimedia Collections				
Graphic Materials		0	0	0
(prints, pictures, photographs, postcards, slides, transparencies, film strips)				
Audio Materials		0	0	0
(cassettes, phonodiscs, CDs, reel-to-reel tapes)				
Film and Video Materials		0	0	0
(motion pictures, video cassettes, laser discs)				
ILL Request Filled		312	205	0
ILL Request Not Filled		118	62	0
Total ILL Requests		430	267	0
Photocopy Orders		251	-	-
Photo Orders		77	57	-
Gate Count		1,433	-	-

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MSS #	Main Entry	Title statement	Linear ft.	BV	OBV	CF	VFM	Processor	Notes
284	O'Kelly, Seumas	Seumas O'Kelly papers	0.50					AW	
285	Hubbs, Barbara Burr	Barbara Burr Hubbs papers	1.50					AW	
PP34		Grant & Ward Bankruptcy collection	0.50					WR/PS	
286		History of the City of Cairo, Illinois manuscript	1.50					AW	
287	Burroughs, Lay G.	Lay G. Burroughs papers	1.00					AL	
288	Arnold, Seth J.	Seth J. Arnold papers	0.5					AL	
1814	Fontaine, Leslie T.	Leslie T. Fontaine VFM					1	AL	
1821	Smatlak, Jerry J.	Jerry J. Smatlak VFM					1	AL	
289	Cox, Winifred	Winifred Cox papers	3.00					AW	

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[illegible]



SELECTED RESOURCES

Books and Journal Articles

- Abraham, Terry. "Oliver W. Holmes Revisited: Five Levels of Arrangement and Description in Practice." *American Archivist* 54 (Summer 1991): 370–77.
- Abraham, Terry, Stephen E Balzarini, and Anne Frantilla. "What is backlog is prologue: a measurement of archival processing." *American Archivist* 48 (Winter 1985): 31–44.
- Brown, William. "Group Processing: Planning and Management Strategies." *Provenance* II, no. 2 (1984): 1–14.
- Brunton, Paul, and Tim Robinson. "Arrangement and Description." Chapter 8 in *Keeping Archives*, edited by Judith Ellis. (Sydney, Australia: D W Thorpe, 2000).
- Carmicheal, David W. *Organizing Archival Records: A Practical Method of Arrangement and Description for Small Archives*, 2nd edition. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004).
- Davis, W. N. "Budgeting for Archival Processing." *American Archivist* 43 (Spring 1980): 209–12.
- Denken, Jean Marie. "An Incremental Approach to Archival Processing" SLAC–PUB–10135, September 2004. <http://www.slac.stanford.edu/cgi-wrap/getdoc/slac-pub-10135.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2009)
- Deodato, Joseph. "Becoming Responsible Mediators: The Application of Postmodern Perspectives to Archival Arrangement & Description." *Progressive Librarian* 27 (Summer 2006): 52–63.
- Desnoyers, Megan. "When is it Processed?" In Daniels, Maygene F., and Walch, Timothy, eds. *A Modern Archives Reader* (Washington, DC: National Archives Trust Fund Board, 1984): 309–25. (Originally published in *Midwestern Archivist* VII, no. 2 (1982): 5–23.)
- Dojka, John. "Organizing Large Contemporary Manuscript and Archival Collections: Ideas for Planning Work." *Georgia Archive* X, no. 2 (Fall 1982): 25–37.
- Eastwood, Terry. "Putting the Parts of the Whole Together: Systematic Arrangement of Archives." *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000): 93–116.
- Erickson, Paul, and Robert Schuster. "Beneficial Shocks: The Place of Processing-Cost Analysis in Archival Administration." *American Archivist* 58 (Winter 1995): 32–53.
- Greene, Mark A., and Dennis Meissner. "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing." *American Archivist* 68, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2005): 208–63.
- Hackbart-Dean, Pam, and Christine de Catanzaro. "The Strongest Link: The Management and Processing of Archival Collections." *Archival Issues* 25, no. 2 (2002): 125–36.