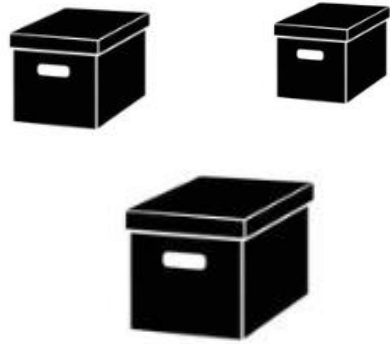




“Try not. Do.”

Archives Management Basics
to Engage and Elevate Your Archives

Introduction



Community-centered audio archives project by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Oregon Folklife Network, and University of Oregon Libraries.



Pinelands Folklife Project tee shirt, circa 1985, celebrating the first use of computers in folklore fieldwork by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

What Is An Archives?

- ▶ **archives** : records created or received by a person, family, or organization and preserved because of their continuing value
 - ▶ “Papers” for individual and families
 - ▶ “Records” for organizations
 - ▶ “Collections” for purposefully collected records
- ▶ **provenance** : origin or source of records, referring to the individual, family, or organization, and more specifically the functions or activities that give rise to those records
- ▶ **original order** : the organization and sequence of records established by the creator of the records
- ▶ **additional key concepts** :
 - ▶ active vs. inactive records
 - ▶ permanent vs. non-permanent
 - ▶ informational and evidentiary value; also emotive value?
 - ▶ collections are hierarchical and ordered



“Is the Force in archives, too, Obi-Wan?”
“Yes, Luke, it is. And like the Force, archives too are all around us and have the potential to bind us together.”

See the Society of American Archivists’
[Dictionary of Archives Terminology,](https://dictionary.archivists.org/)
<https://dictionary.archivists.org/>

What Is Archives Management?

- ▶ **to archive** : v. to acquire, preserve, and *make available over time* the papers and records of individuals, families, or organizations
- ▶ “Hear today, here tomorrow.”



- ▶ **archives management functions**
 - community collaboration
 - donor relations
 - acquisition and accessioning
 - arrangement and description
 - housing and storage
 - security and integrity
 - digitization and preservation
 - digital collection development
 - licensing and rights management
 - access and use

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes in various shades, creating a modern, layered effect. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, some of which are semi-transparent, allowing the colors beneath to show through. The overall composition is dynamic and contemporary.

to improve your
physical and intellectual control
of your collections

incremental,
iterative,
extensible

policies,
tools and techniques,
communities of practice

The Life Cycle of Records

Field

Public

Office

Archives

community collaboration
donor relations
acquisition and accessioning
arrangement and description
housing and storage
security and integrity
digitization and preservation
digital collection development
licensing and rights management
access and use

Records Retention Schedule

- ▶ **retention schedule** : n. a document that identifies and describes an organization's records, usually at the series level, and provides instructions for the disposition of records
- ▶ **example**

Series	Description	Office Retention	Final Disposition	Notes
Exhibit planning files	Proposals, planning notes, schedules	Active + 3 years	Destroy	Retain longer for significant exhibitions.
Exhibit brochures or catalogs	Publications, promotional materials	Permanent	Archive	Keep three copies of final versions.

- **addresses** : what, when, and why, but who and how
- **supported by** : collection register, tracking calendar and checklist

Collection Processing

- ▶ **arrangement** : n. the process of organizing materials with respect to their provenance and original order, to protect their context and to achieve physical or intellectual control over the materials
 - ▶ Intellectual arrangement into collections, series, and files
 - ▶ Physical arrangement of materials into housing (boxes, folders) and storage (shelves, stacks)
 - ▶ Processing of materials for conservation and retrieval and use
- ▶ **description** : n. the process of creating a set of data representing an archival resource or component thereof
 - ▶ Catalog record
 - ▶ Finding aid
 - ▶ Collection level description
 - ▶ Title, dates, creator, provenance, scope and contents, subjects
 - ▶ Component list noting series and items
 - ▶ Also web sites, social media posts, digital collections
- ▶ [Describing Archives: A Content Standard](#), published by the Society of American Archivists.

Collection Inventories / Component Lists

Component Number	Component Level	Unit ID	Unit Title	Unit Date	Extent	Format	Box	Folder
0	collection	1	Exhibits records					
1	series	1	Permanent exhibits					
2	subseries	A	Sara Siestreem, Coos basketry, exhibit					
3	file		Photographs		3	photographic prints	1	1
4	item		Exhibit case 1 photograph		1	photographic print	1	1
4	item		Exhibit case 2 photograph		1	photographic print	1	1
4	item		Exhibit case 2 photograph		1	photographic print	1	1
2	subseries	B	Creston Smith, Warm Springs beadwork, exhibit		12	photographic prints	2	1-3
1	series	2	Traveling exhibits					

- Hierarchical description
 - naturally extensible and incremental
 - adaptable to spreadsheets w/ component number and level info
- Spreadsheets facilitate controlled vocabularies, export and import to systems or plain text

Physical Processing

- ▶ housing : acid free, light shielding, not necessarily air-tight
- ▶ paper : metal removed, binders removed, stored without slumping
- ▶ slides : small quantities in slide sleeves; large quantities in slide boxes
- ▶ negatives : always in sleeves; handled with clean hands or gloves
- ▶ photographic prints : stored horizontal or vertical with support
- ▶ audiovisual materials : cassettes on edge; sound discs vertical
 - ▶ Exceptions: 16-in. sound discs stored flat; film reels stored flat

Physical Processing



Digital Archives Management

- ▶ Digital Records Concerns
 - ▶ File Attendance : The presence or absence of a digital file
 - ▶ File Fixity : The integrity of a file over time
 - ▶ File Viability : The operability of a file over time
- ▶ The 3-2-1 Rule for Digital Preservation
 - ▶ 3 copies, 2 formats; 1 off-site
- ▶ Tools
 - ▶ Basic Set Up: Archives Workstation, Dropbox Account, External Hard Drive
 - ▶ File Transfer Utility for moving files
 - ▶ AVP Fixity for reporting on file directories

Digital File Naming

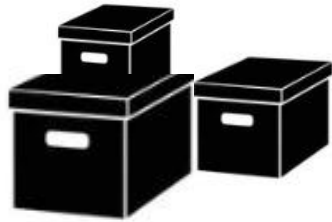
- ▶ For digital copies of items in a collection,
 - ▶ create a folder directory to mirror physical housing
 - ▶ name files to correspond to collection items

Repository Code	Collection ID	Box #	Folder #	Format Code	Item #
ofn	001	b001	f002	ph	001
ofn001_b001_f002_p001.jpg					

- ▶ For born digital items in a collection
 - ▶ use series identifiers instead of box numbers
 - ▶ use subseries identifiers instead of folder numbers, as necessary

Repository Code	Collection ID	Series ID	Subseries ID	Format Code	Item Number
ofn	002	001	20260511	ph	001
ofn002_001_20260511_ph001.jpg					

- Padding numbers to two or three digits facilitates sorting
- ISO 8601 date and time format (YYYYMMDD)



Thank you

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