

consider the future, I hope that we shift our focus to developing solutions and best practices for these difficult issues.

Analyzing this book as an archivist left me with more questions than answers. And that's fine. It made me more aware and introspective of myself as an archivist as well as the archives profession, and it will undoubtedly stimulate dialogue surrounding diversity and archives going forward. Ultimately, Speltz succeeds in bringing previously unrepresented voices and narratives to the conversation. The question remains: Can we do the same in our archives?

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*National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Detroit*, directed by Kathryn Bigelow (Los Angeles, CA: Annapurna Pictures, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Including "Radical Empathy in Archival Practice," Shannon O'Neill, Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez, Molly Brown, Dinah Handel, Rachel Mattson, Giordana Mecagni, Holly Alicia Smith, and Kelly Wooten (July 28, 2017); "Intersectionality in Identity-Focused Archives," Rosemary K. J. Davis, Itza A. Cabajal, Kirsten Strigel Carter, Stephanie Krauss, Linda J. Long, Elizabeth Novara, Chloe Raub, Nikki Lynn Thomas, Florence M. Turcotte, and Samantha Winn (July 28, 2017); "Immigration Archival Collections: Difference, Transnationality, and Relevance," Volodymyr Chumachenko, Lisa Huntsha, Daniel Necas, and Danielle Scott Taylor (July 28, 2017), among others.

## Appraisal and Acquisition Strategies

Edited by Michael Shallcross and Christopher J. Prom. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2016. 196 pp. Softcover, PDF, and EPUB. Members \$24.99, nonmembers \$34.99. Softcover ISBN 978-0-931828-00-3; PDF ISBN 978-0-931828-11-9; EPUB ISBN 978-0-931828-10-2.

We are well into the digital era with many if not most repositories contending with born-digital materials and hybrid archives. A brief survey of the archival literature shows an abundance of information regarding nearly every aspect of born-digital archivy. So many of the articles, case studies, special issues, toolkits, and white papers elucidate how to process or preserve born-digital materials. But how do we best collect in the digital era? How do we build collection development policies with this new way of recording human activity? How do we appraise digital content with its volume and complexity? What changes do we need to make to our accessioning procedures for born-digital materials? These types of questions are addressed in *Appraisal and Acquisition Strategies*, part of SAA's *Trends in Archives Practice* series. There are, of course, sources for information regarding accessioning and appraisal of born-digital

materials. The *AIMS Inter-Institutional Model for Stewardship*<sup>1</sup> comes to mind with its high-level workflow for born-digital materials, as do some of the recent publications from OCLC and CLIR.<sup>2</sup> What the modules in *Appraisal and Acquisition Strategies* do so well is consolidate a body of theory and practice and present it in an authoritative but usable fashion. Collection development, donor relationships, the embedded archivist, and authenticity are just a few of the topics outlined and synthesized within the modules.

As someone who supervises archivists and is in the process of establishing a program for ingest, processing, preservation, and access to born-digital materials, I found the three modules helpful in providing an architecture in which to frame my thoughts. I can also imagine referring back to the volume as I approach certain problems or try to establish specific workflows. I first read module 15, then module 16, followed by module 14. It made sense to think about the record life cycle in this temporal fashion: collection development and donors, appraisal of materials, followed by accessioning. As the modules reveal, this linear progression of records through archival functions doesn't hold up within the digital environment. The fragility and complexity of born-digital materials blur the lines between what we think of as discrete archival functions such as appraisal, accessioning, arrangement, description, and preservation. The organization of the volume works as is by focusing first very broadly (the universe of digital records) before moving to specific, granular recommendations (accessioning records at a single repository). Nevertheless, the modules function independently of one another and provide insight wherever you find yourself in the process.

In module 14, "Appraising Digital Records," Geof Huth tackles both technical and practical aspects of appraising digital records, and yet it was effortless to read, a testament to his acumen with the written word. Huth, a longtime New York State archivist, expertly frames appraisal, regardless of format, and elucidates its centrality to the practice of archives. He claims the Jenkinsonian vision of the profession with archivists as keepers is irrevocably dead. Huth first outlines the digital ecosystem, and because of its complexity and fragility, the ways in which appraisal should be approached differently. The nature of archival work, and appraisal more specifically, needs to change; it must begin much earlier in the archival record cycle. Huth goes so far as to state, "Archivists need to be part of the world where archives are made" (p. 15). This leads to a lengthy discussion of the benefits, but also some of the challenges, of the embedded archivist. Embedded archivists, according to Huth, are active and involved within their larger institutions, be they in academia, state government, or the private sector.

According to Huth, the profession has no universal, agreed-upon method for appraisal. However, several usable methods and techniques exist that can

assist with determining record copy, record transfer, arrangement, preservation, and access. The selection of method often depends on the individual institution, or even on the individual archivist's needs. Huth is right to point out that every appraisal decision is always based on the written *or unwritten* mandates or goals of the institution.

Huth closes the module by offering a succinct bit of wisdom: "Appraisal is analysis. Your most important tool is your mind" (p. 47). He gives a five-step heuristic in conclusion: define your processes, practice, build relationships, assess limitations and improve skills, and finally, repeat. Given the changing landscape and the potential to provide outdated technical advice, I see these steps as a lasting roadmap in which to think through appraisal of archives, whether born digital, analog, or a hybrid of both.

Module 15, "Collecting Digital Manuscripts and Archives," focuses on building relationships with donors and setting institutional policies. Of the three modules, I found this one to be the most broadly engaging, perhaps because it is a bit outside my purview as a technical services archivist in a more traditionally organized library. The authors, Megan Barnard, associate director for acquisitions and administration at the Harry Ransom Center, and Gabriela Redwine, digital archivist at the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library, both have a great deal of experience, working together and independently.

Barnard and Redwine discuss how to integrate born-digital materials into collection development policies. I found this section illuminating and entirely helpful as I think through establishing my own strategies and workflows. The authors give a refreshing primacy and a sense of urgency to developing a policy, one that supports the mission of the institution, and one that addresses the value of born-digital materials, particularly in light of the costs associated with long-term preservation. They offer specific advice on what types of information the policy should address, including how and who best to write one. The best policies discuss what to do with materials created by individuals other than the creator, which file types are accepted, what to do with hardware, and how or why to collect for uniqueness. I found the scope of this section helpful; it provides scaffolding for a lone arranger who is responsible for the policy *and* the processing, as well as insightful details for a practitioner siloed in one functional area of the repository.

The authors offer much useful information in terms of building relationships with creators, referencing the AIMS donor survey, and including a sampling of questions. Concerns about recordkeeping best practices inevitably arise when engaging creators about their digital habits. The module gives a bulleted list of suggestions to offer creators including how to name files, how to label sensitive or private information, and how to arrange documents if using a shared computer. The benefits of having more than a single person liaise with

creators, a critical yet often ignored curatorial model, is given rightful preference. The repository and its mission, rather than an individual, are trusted, and the relationship can continue regardless of staff transition. Barnard and Redwine discuss copyright and privacy and offer great suggestions on how to successfully navigate these potentially difficult conversations. The preferred method is, of course, through a well-thought-out acquisition agreement.

Readers of the module will feel better equipped to start collecting born-digital materials and hybrid archives. The text grounds what may feel like a nebulous process into very concrete and actionable ideas: create policy, build relationships, document events, and, above all, approach the process with flexibility and a sense of curiosity.

In module 16, "Accessioning Digital Archives," Erin Faulder, digital archivist at Cornell University, introduces accessioning regardless of format with a solid definition and a sense of its importance. The learning objective of the module is to provide readers with the tools necessary to establish a basic accessioning program that can handle ingest of born-digital archives. The module outlines and defines key concepts in accessioning born-digital materials: integrity, authenticity, the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model, and the Producer-Archive Interface Methodology Abstract Standard (PAIMAS).

Faulder does an excellent job of articulating why, when it comes to accessioning born-digital archives, the perfect really does become the enemy of the good. But also, of course, she's careful to point out that the good can always be made better. It is clear that Faulder supports an iterative and extensible framework for establishing procedures, allocating resources, and building infrastructure.

Of the three, module 16 is the most laden with acronyms and other technical terms, although it's difficult to imagine a way around this. The module offers a concise introduction to the OAIS, its core concepts, roles, and functional entities, as well as the more in-depth transactions in the PAIMAS between the information producer and the archives. Both OAIS and PAIMAS are conceptual models and thus distill but perhaps overly simplify the real-world messiness associated with born-digital materials. Following this discussion of perfect-world workflows and solutions, Faulder takes the reader through some concrete steps to ensure successful accessioning, preservation, and access to born-digital archives.

She shares with the reader a series of policies essential for sustainability: collection development policy, appraisal policy, and digital preservation policy. Likewise, Faulder outlines the resources necessary for accessioning born-digital archives. In addition to storage and tools, this section includes a checklist of baseline level skills for staff, a list that might prove useful to an administrator thinking about job descriptions and hiring. Last, Faulder tackles the accessioning

process. By this point, if you are not actively engaged in the work, the module becomes a bit dense and esoteric. Though, again, it is a text I imagine readers referencing often when writing local implementation manuals.

Module 16 concludes by offering a boost of confidence for readers. Think holistically about digital materials and associated metadata; consider how tools, policies, and infrastructure interconnect and reinforce one another to build a complex and sustainable environment. This systems thinking matched with a consistent approach should give archivists confidence in their ability to maintain the authenticity and integrity of the born-digital materials accessioned into their repositories.

The three modules complement one another and work well as a unit. The rhythm in the repetition of information doesn't feel overly formulaic because of how the information is embedded within different contexts. The primacy given throughout to policy development and relationship building sets a strong tone that binds the modules together. This is a foundational volume that at once offers high-level introductions to appraisal, collection development, and accessioning while also providing enough specification, methodology, and nuance to be useful to the practitioner.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> AIMS Work Group, *AIMS Born-Digital Collections: An Inter-Institutional Model for Stewardship* (2012), [http://dcs.library.virginia.edu/files/2013/02/AIMS\\_final.pdf](http://dcs.library.virginia.edu/files/2013/02/AIMS_final.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The three modules each provide comprehensive "Further Reading" sections.

## Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge

By Melissa Adler. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017. 248 pp. Softcover. \$28.00. ISBN 978-0823276363.

**M**elissa Adler's *Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge* examines the Library of Congress's catalog as an "archives" and analyzes cataloging practices for how "unintelligible and unviable bodies of literature are banished and hidden through policies, oversights, and indecision" (p. 152). Adler, assistant professor in the School of Information Science at the University