

How to keep a clear conscience in a foggy environment, or ‘accountable subjectivity’ in archival appraisal.



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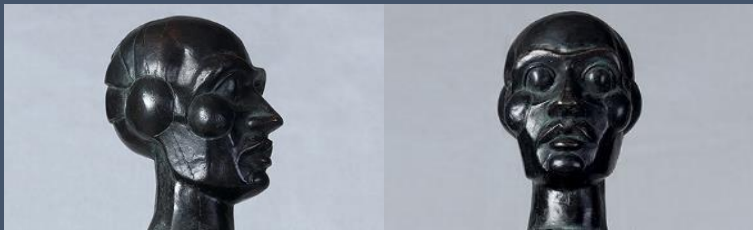
Centre for Research Collections



ARCHIVES



RARE BOOKS



ART



MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS



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The Project...

To design and implement appraisal methodology and processes to be used across collections at the University of Edinburgh.

Two objectives:

- a) The development of a methodology to be used in multiple environments and allowing for transparency in decision-making on appraisal.
- b) That the fundamental principles underpinning the methodology would reflect the theoretical considerations of archival appraisal as articulated widely by archival theorists.



What we needed to do:

- Refine accession processes by collaborating with cataloguing archivist.
- Gather information on collections and on space/storage
- Develop methodology and processes to be shared with peers
- Create appraisal and collections review process and workflow



Doing Appraisal




A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Date of review	Ref. code/Box	Record Titles (where applicable)	Location in UCF/LAI	Content Description/comment	Date of start and end	Conservation status	Min. area	Behaviour	Disposal	Retention	Review	Any prior processing/loss	DP/PI and conditions governing							
27/11/2016	box 10	Alma Economy 15	26.2.8	UNC 1	1972-1974	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Dispose				open							
27/11/2016	box 19	Morocco 3	26.2.8	P	1970-1975	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Dispose				needs screening							
27/11/2016	box 20	AI Population and Environment	26.2.8	P	1954-1972	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Where applicable full transcription of				open							
27/11/2016	box 21	Alma Economy 15	26.2.8	P	1969-1970	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Where applicable full transcription of				open							
27/11/2016	box 22	Alma Regions 1	26.2.8	P	1963-1972	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Dispose				open							
27/11/2016	box 23	Central African Republic (Rhodesia)	26.2.8	P	1963-1963	Good	A	10	A. items in good condition but				DP form, needs further screening							
27/11/2016	box 24	Les Auto, no 1	26.2.8	P	1963-1968	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Where applicable full transcription of				DP form, needs further screening							
27/11/2016	box 25	Kenya 13	26.2.8	P	1974-1976	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Where applicable full transcription of				open							
27/11/2016	box 26	Congo 1c	26.2.8	S	1962-1963	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Where applicable full transcription of				open							
27/11/2016	box 27	Mau Mau 2	26.2.9	P	1964-1976	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Where applicable full transcription of				open							
27/11/2016	box 28	Magna 2	26.2.9	N	1956-1965	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Where applicable full transcription of				DP form or closed, needs further screening							
27/11/2016	box 29	Mide East 1	26.2.9	P	1950-1971	sat	A	20	A. standard boxes and folders. Where applicable full transcription of information dispose				Open							



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Step by step process

Step	Process	Note
1	Survey and Processing Plan Worksheet *	To include essential collection management information e.g. reference codes, accession details, creators, agents, legal environment, priority rating.
2	Collection review	Assign initial appraisal decisions while collecting information.
3	Appraisal report *	Make recommendations on selection <i>and</i> disposal (or non-selection)
		<i>For de-accession/post re-appraisal</i>
4	Disposal record	Create disposal record for material <i>not</i> selected during collection review.

* Survey format courtesy of the PACSCL/CLIR Hidden Collections Processing Project, Philadelphia Area Research consortium, 2009-2015 Date accessed Feb 2019 https://web.archive.org/web/20150921200615/http://clir-pacscl.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/Survey_and_Processing-Manual.pdf

Appraisal report template: see Craig, Barbara, 2006, Appendix 6, *Archival Appraisal , Theory and Practice*, K.G. SAUR

Decision	Category	Reason Description	Action
Select	A	Obligated to retain for legislative purposes.	Retain
Select	B	Has obvious informational and archival value, evidence of development, structure and decision-making, evidence of substantial functions and activities, unique.	Retain
Select	C	Falls within the selection remit of the University under current appraisal criteria and Collections Management Policy 2015-2020.	Retain
Dispose	A	No longer of business use. Obligated to destroy for legislative purposes (GDPR).	Destroy
Dispose	B	No informational or archival value, not no evidence of development. Decision-making, substantial functions or activities. In duplicate.	Destroy
Dispose	C	Damaged, not legible, not salvageable.	Destroy
Dispose	D	Re-direct to library or Museums for assessment as part of special/general collections.	Dispose internally
Dispose	E	Re-direct to a more suitable archival program.	Dispose externally
Review	A	Within retention period for possible business or litigation use.	Re-appraisal, __ years
Review	B	Context to be ascertained by relevant subject expert.	Consult relevant subject expert and assign new category.
Review	C	Context to be established by deeper processing by Archivist. Possible disposal after processing.	Deeper appraisal by Archivist during processing

Consistent factors throughout appraisal process:

Step by step process +

Managing relationships with individuals and functions

Need for Flexible “thick description” where information scant

Acknowledgement of the need for continued discussion and review

Need for flexibility in documentation in relation to formats and volumes (e.g. digital preservation)



The Digital aspect...



In conclusion...

Have we been able to keep
a clear conscience?

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