

Archives and e-records management in Canada: a state of the art report

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Abstract:

The author visited Canada during March 2010 to study Canadian Archival system especially records management in archives in Ontario province; the driving rationale for the study was the realization that there existed very less or no archives and record management program in India. This study intends to report different types of archives and record management (ARM) programs in Canada, with special reference to e-records management viz. automation status, creation of virtual exhibits, preservation of digital images, metadata standard for e-records etc. The prime objectives were to overview the current state of modern record keeping in the Government of Canada and identify the core competencies required to build effective record keeping infrastructures in the electronic work environment that has emerged in most government institutions.

Introduction:

Canada is one of the most successful nations at identifying, valuing and preserving its history and cultural heritage. The first efforts to acquire archival records originated from the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, established in 1824. The first archivist was Douglas Brymner, a journalist, who collected historical papers, old manuscripts and records in Quebec, Montreal and Toronto; his successor, Arthur Doughty also collected and both approached the federal government to provide a building to house the growing collection of historical records. Wilson (1982) identified that Public Archives of Canada, formally recognized by statute in 1912 and not established primarily as a government records office. Its intellectual origins can be traced directly to the formation of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec in 1824. Over the past two decades, unprecedented growth has occurred in Canadian archives. As the number of archives has increased over the period, the new challenges and opportunities

impel libraries to work together more closely. No longer can libraries preserve historical records without prior consultation, without a clear mandate and without a realistic look at the scope and implications of objectives

The Canadian archival system comprises the National Archives of Canada, the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA), the provincial councils of archives, national and regional professional associations and other repositories from across the country.

. The following are the objectives of the current study:

- ✚ the status of archives and e-records management in Canada
- ✚ the level of computerization in archives
- ✚ the use of standard for managing archival records
- ✚ the challenges of managing e-records and associated problems.

Defining archives and related terms:

The term "archives" in the current context is not restricted to actual records, produced or received by any individual or organization in carrying on their work. It also refers to the

institution or program responsible for taking charge, arranging, describing and conserving archives and making them accessible as and when required by anybody. Simpson (1948) opined, 'Archives to most people represent an

obscure and remote institution which is narrowly specialized in its organization and serves a relatively few people...he pointed out the dynamic which creates archives and maintain their vitality springs from three primary sources: a sense of tidiness, a sense of tradition and a sense of crisis. A record is defined as all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form, made or received by an agency in connection with the transaction of public

The widely adopted ISO 15489 standards define records management as: "field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions.

E-records management refers to the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the process for capturing and maintaining evidence of information about business activities and transactions in the form of records in electronic format (Roper and Millar, 1999).

J.C.Eamer-Goult (1995) in his thesis traced the division of responsibilities amongst records professionals as per records life status viz. active, semi-active and inactive and opined incorrect. He further discussed separate records occupations: those who

Description of the archives visited:

Archives in Canada range in physical format from traditional paper files, minute books, ledgers, diaries, letters and reports, to microfilm, photographic images, cartographic materials, architectural drawings, motion-picture film, sound recordings, videotape, machine-readable data files, diskettes and even Web sites.

The author was based at York University which is Canada's third-largest university; the archives and special collections are located at

business as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the organizations. The records management is viewed as a subset of the larger information management issue.

The Society of American Archivists state that archives management is "The general oversight of a program to appraise, acquire, arrange and describe, preserve, authenticate, and provide access to permanently valuable records.

looked after active records called record managers and those who handled inactive ones leveled as archivist.

The fonds register is a list of all archive records preserved at archives sorted alphabetically by the name of its creator. Fonds consists of individual's records pertaining to his career as a scholar and includes research files, professional files, manuscripts, as well as personal files.

Finding aids are self lists/descriptive tools which provide an overview and detailed file lists for all of the material in an archive, For example registers, guides, inventories, indexes, containing information about records in archival custody, that establish administrative, physical or intellectual control over the holdings of an archives, and make it possible to retrieve particular records or information from these archives.

Room 305, Scott Library on York University's Keele Campus. Since its inception, Archives & Special Collections has focused on acquiring high-quality research collections that support the teaching and research programs of the University. In particular, York University Archives has acquired and made accessible a large number of primary and rare secondary resources on Canadian Labor History. The records in the archives are available for use by

York faculty and students, as well as external researchers at York University Archives, Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm. All archival or special collections materials must be used within York University Archives.

University of Toronto is Canada's largest and most distinguished university. It is equally important to visit University of Toronto's Archives Records Management Services (UTARMS

<http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utarms/>) which is located on the fourth floor of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library and responsible for the appraisal, acquisition, preservation and use of University records of permanent value and the private records of individuals and organizations associated with the university. Dr Garron Wells is the archivist welcomed the author on 8th March, morning and had a Table: 1 List of Archives visited

wonderful discussion on the topic. The author also met Gabriela Mircea to discuss on ETDs at Tspace repository.

The University Archives providing a research service, an administrative service through the development and implementation of the University's records management program. UTARMS records management program seeks to promote systematic control of university records in accordance with legal statutes and University policy. It provides guidance to administrative and academic units on management of their records. UTARMS defines a basic set metadata elements. The standard is designed to be used as a reference tool by managers, IT personnel and software vendors involved in the design, selection and implementation of electronic recordkeeping and related information management systems.

Name of the archives	Date of visit	Automation status
University of Toronto Archives and Records Management System UTARMS http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utarms/	8/3/2010	No software used
York University Archives & Special Collections http://www.library.yorku.ca/ccm/ArchivesSpecialCollections/index.htm	Mentor university	In house developed html based Software by CCA
Ryerson University Library and Archives (RULA) 1971 http://www.library.ryerson.ca/	13/3/2010	MINISIS
Carlton University	17/3/2010	DB/Textworks & Irfanview is used for images
Archives de l' Universite' d'Ottawa http://www.uottawa.ca/services/archives/	16/3/2010	No software

Library And Archives, LAC, Canada;2004 1490 - Present	19/3/2010	MIKAN
Archives of Ontario http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/ 1700's- Present	12/3/2010	MINISIS
Toronto City Archives http://www.toronto.ca/archives/	23/3/2010	WebGencat.

Archives of the University of Ottawa (<http://www.uottawa.ca/services/archives/eng/>) is situated in the Room 012, Marie Curie. The archives gather, select, organize conserve and publicize documents created or accumulated by the University's staff, as well as other documents that have an historical value for the University. The Archives are responsible for encouraging academic and administrative units to manage their records efficiently.

The Archives (<http://www.ryerson.ca/archives/>) serves as the institutional memory of the

Visit to national, provincial and municipal Archives

The Library and Archives in Canada (LAC) preservation laboratory in the city of Gatineau, Québec is a gateway to national archival resources; Visit to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) was important to learn about the Trusted digital repository and digital imaging best practices . The author was greeted by Mr David Ross, Volt and Holding Management Officer, at the spectacular conservation laboratory on the morning of 19th March 2010. The author had discussion with Ms Jessica Squires on archives management and organization; the interesting records, sound recordings, moving images, and

Ryerson community and appraises, preserves, and makes accessible a broad range of primary source materials which provide administrative, academic, fiscal, legal, social, and cultural record of Ryerson University. Owen Jenkins is the archivists. The records management service includes:

- analysis and appraisal;
- file maintenance and arrangement;
- scheduling; semi-active storage and disposition.

presentation by Ms Noreen Hill and Ms Merideth Fletcher on Trusted Digital repository was organized in the second half of the day.

Archives of Ontario selects, acquires, preserves and makes publicly accessible recorded information of provincial significance documenting the political, social, economic and industrial development of Ontario, regardless of physical form or characteristics. This includes textual, cartographic, architectural, photographic and electronic

documentary art. The Archives of Ontario Library holds over 80,000 published items to assist researchers using the archival collection.

The City of Toronto Archives preserve and provide access to records of enduring value regardless of media or format, that provide evidence of the decisions, policies, and activities of the City of Toronto, its predecessor municipalities, and its agencies, boards, and commissions which do not have their own archival programs. The Archives also acquires, preserves, and provides access to non-government records that make a significant contribution to an understanding of the development of the City. Conservation services are integrated with a wide range of archival and records management activities at the City of Toronto Archives. Collection assessments, customized storage systems, re-formatting, user accessibility, and treatments are a major component of preservation management. Material requiring conservation is targeted as early as possible in the processing stages of archival arrangement. Treatments are carried out in the Archives' conservation laboratory.

Carlton University is situated on a beautiful campus bordered by the sparkling Rideau

City of Toronto Archives receives grants from Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) through National Archival Description project (NADP) and Young Canada Works.

River and Canal with bicameral governance structure; there are two archives in the Carlton University campus: viz. The Corporate Records and Archives (<http://www2.carleton.ca/records/>) supports the creation and operation of institutional information (historical, legal, fiscal, administrative and evidentiary value) management plan. The Special Collections and Archive (<http://www.library.carleton.ca/specialcollections/index.html>) is responsible for the library's Special Collections and library's own Archives. It contains print and manuscript materials and because of their content, format, age, or value, need to be preserved or kept apart from the general collection. The collections are located in Room 503 and are accessible only by staff; Patti Harper is the head of Archives and Research Collections. Carleton University's Corporate Archivist is available as a resource for the Carleton community in all aspects of records management in the university context

Organization of records:

In the current context, archive refers to the institutions or organizational units responsible for maintaining the archival record and has following functions:

- ✚ Appraisal of recorded information for its value, selects that which is permanent, and acquires this portion through formal transfer.
- ✚ Conservation of the record, by preserving intrinsically valuable documents in their original physical form or by transferring the information to a permanent documentary form.

- ✚ Arrangement and description of the records in its keeping. The archival principles of arrangement, "provenance" and "respect des fonds" recognize that the archival record is most appropriately kept in its original order, reflecting the manner and context in which it came into being.
- ✚ The fourth function of a modern archive is providing public access. Archival services are changing rapidly, seeking to take full advantage of digitization and the Web to make the original sources for Canadian

history available to all who may want to draw upon.

The principle of “provenance” means that the materials of a particular organization or family must be arranged and described together, and not combined with records that were created separately. Provenance demands that the records be arranged and described as they were when they arrived in the archives, so that the contextual meaning of the materials will not be lost.

'Description proceeds from the general to the specific', beginning with the fonds, and moving through the inverted pyramid from series, to files, to individual items.

Fonds → series → sub series → individual files → items

When a donor decides to donate their archival records to university archives a deed of gift

transferring ownership to particular university and specifying a term governing access and use of the donated material is completed. At the end of each calendar year, university arrange for the evaluation of private archives donated over the course of the year. Private archival collections, if donated as a gift-in-kind to university archives and special collections, may be eligible for a tax receipt issued through university's office.

Majority of the archives not only lack formal policies for appraising the full range of documentary sources created by their institutions, from the president's office to informal student groups, but also seem concerned mostly with having methods to deal with traditional documentary sources.

Archival standard and application of software

The Bureau of Canadian Archivists (BCA) established the Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards (PCDS) to plan and coordinate the development of descriptive standards for the archival profession in Canada and Rules for Archival Description (RAD), first published in 1990, to develop finding aids, so that records could be more easily retrieved and exchanged through automated systems and a union database would be created. A Rules for Archival Description (RAD) focuses on specific media: graphic materials, machine-readable records, architectural drawings, textual records, sound recordings, and moving image materials.

Archival association/networks in Canada:

Canadian Council of Archives (<http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca>) CCA founded in 1985 as a result of federal-provincial efforts to encourage and facilitate the evolution of an archival system in Canada. Each provincial/territorial council has a representative on the CCA. The Council tailor

MARC-AMC (Archival and Manuscript control) is another professional standard for the description and exchange of archival information and this format as a communication vehicle is recognized almost universally as is the desirability of library-archives compatibility in information exchange.

MINISIS is the popular software package used by majority of the archives in Canada and considered as best archival software. A lot of projects on application of different types of software for archives and records management are on their way. The archivists in Carlton University are also trying open source software viz. Drupal for in house management.

its policies and Programs to reflect archival needs and requirements of the regions.

Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) consists of over 600 members and represents archival institutions, all those working in archives, as well as users and supporters of archives. Established in 1993 as a result of the amalgamation of the Ontario Association of Archivists and Ontario Council of A, the AAO is the voice of Archives in Ontario.

ARCHEION-Ontario's Archival Information Network; It is a searchable database of descriptions of archival fonds and collections

across Ontario, managed by the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO).

Observation and conclusion:

Records are considered as commodity and attempts to improve their management has necessitated to a more integrated and controlled approach. In this study it is noted that archivist and records managers have at present very little influence on policy implementation of archives and working under university librarian and less influence on decision making. All the university archives get a nominal amount from library budget. No separate budget for archives is available; modest budgets are allocated for rare book collection.

The total archives concept in English Canada is based on American system. The responsibility for collecting and copying its historical records fell to the government; with the so called convergence of technologies are helping to fulfill new demands and rising

expectations and to empower the end user. The archival record is not constant but is continually created and augmented. In any modern administrative body, whether a large government or a local voluntary association, information is recorded for some administrative purpose. It may then be kept for reference or for audit and legal reasons. When it is no longer current, the designated archivist of that administrative body selects records of enduring value for preservation and future reference. It was possible to establish very good relations with the archivists of these institutions and the author will continue to keep contact with them. It is expected that the findings of this study will serve as a building block to deeper examinations of broader issues such as the core competencies with respect to records and record keeping.

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