Foundations of Public Health Policy

Capturing Processing Metrics and Qualifying MPLP Practices

CLIR Symposium, Monday, March 29, 2010

Emily R. Novak Gustainis, Collections Services Archivist
Center for the History of Medicine, Countway Library
emily_gustainis@hms.harvard.edu

Introduction and Objectives

- Provide access to unprocessed collections that speak to the origins and future direction of our contemporary health care system.

- Facilitate constituency cultivation, including collection development, community building, and the assessment of processing deliverables by different types of researchers.

- Enable workflow documentation (the "meta" part of the project)
  - Categorize processing activities
  - Hard data on the time it takes to complete processing activities employing our brand of MPLP

The author proposes that instead of trying to maintain an ideal standard of processing, we look at processing as a range of choices along a continuum for each of the four essential processing activities: arrangement, preservation, description, and screening. The continuum runs from the found, or original, state of the material up to the highest possible level of each activity, e.g., a calendared collection where each item is individually filed in an acid neutral folder in an acid neutral box.

- Megan Floyd Desnoyers -

From the essay, "When is a Collection Processed?"
The Midwest Archivist 7 (1, 1982): 5-23.

MPLP: Applications

- **Prioritization**
  - Adjusting our processing approach to researcher needs
  - Matching collections to levels of practice rather than imposing uniform practice on all collections

- **Initial review and processing plan**
  - Series, subseries determined as a result of initial review and reflected in work plan
  - Plans generally assume processing to level II-B, a refinement of the processing levels drafted by Harvard Committees for a University-wide survey of repository holdings in 2009
  - Labor divided

- **Folder listing is key**

- **Preservation activities**
  - Remove contents from hanging files and "original" folders and re-house in acid free folders
  - Keep photographs with manuscript materials (using sleeves or buffers)
  - Remove sticky notes and discard. (We photocopy any notes that have any "added-value" content and are not just repeating what is on the folder title.)
  - We only remove paperclips and staples if they are obviously damaging the documents.
  - Flag original newspaper clippings for eventual copying to acid free paper and discard. May or may not do this at conclusion of processing.

- **Description**
  - Biographical note authored separately; descriptive elements maintained in Word doc, but actual finding aid authored using XML template

- **Encoding**
  - Minimal "value added" EAD tagging

Metrics Capture

Microsoft Access database used by all project participants to:

- Log daily activities related to series (or subseries, etc.) to quarter hour

  – Barcoding and Labeling
  – Collection Review and Processing Planning
  – Description
  – Digitization
  – Folder Listing (in spreadsheet)
  – Project Tracking (the amount of time we are taking to track the amount of time it is taking…)
  – Rearranging
  – Preservation Photocopying
  – Preservation Tasks (Misc.)
  – Reboxing
  – Refoldering

- Record amount spent for all activities per record center carton/cubic foot

- Extrapolate amount of time spent per series by adding up time spent on each box in that series
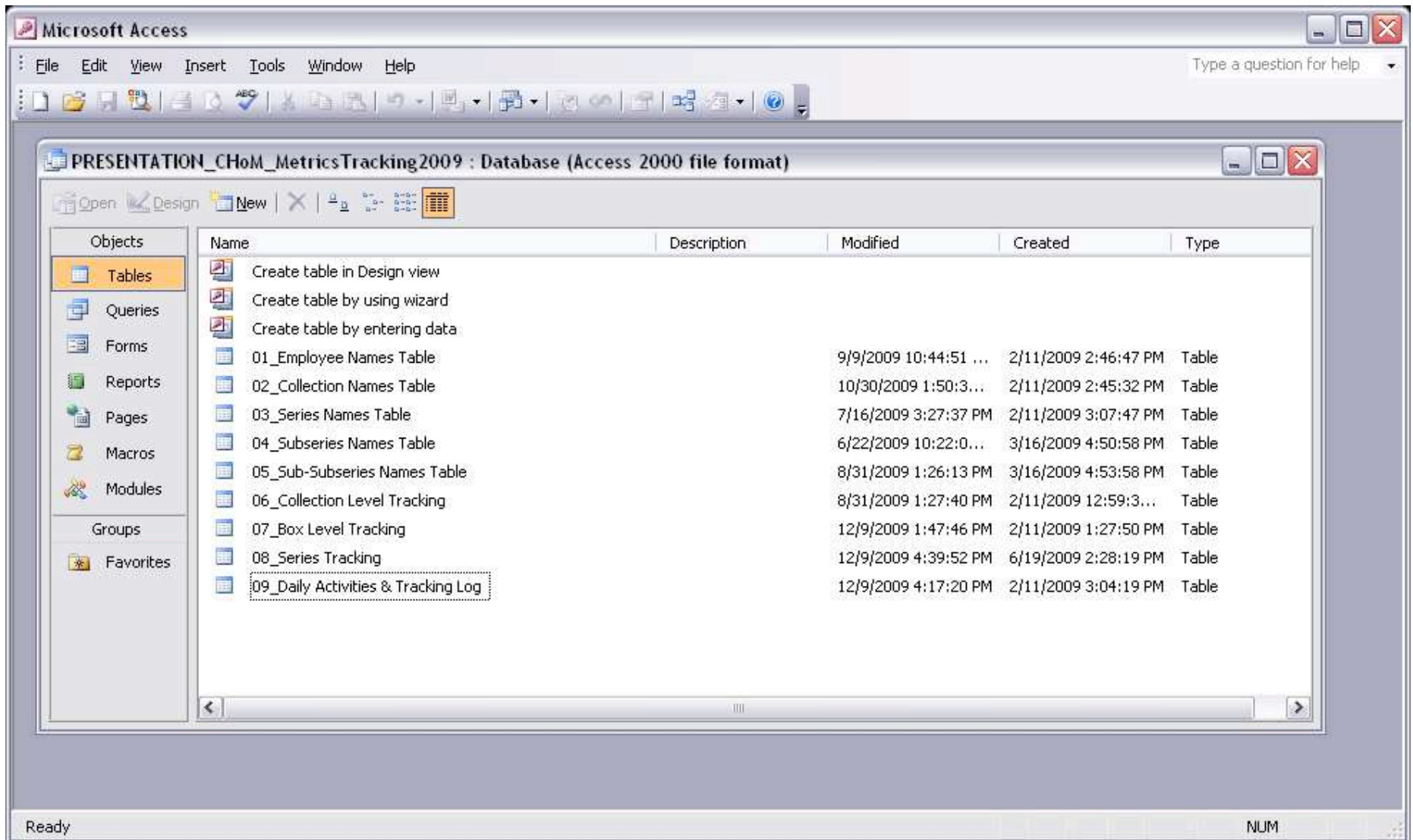
- Track progress on collection as a whole

February Poll…

Respondents:

- 24.6% do not keep statistics on collections processed in a calendar or fiscal year
- 87.3% do not measure the amount of time they spend on creating processing plans
- 76.8% do not keep statistics on box and folder listing
- 76.4% do not keep statistics on preservation photocopying
- 88.9% do not keep statistics on miscellaneous preservation activities
- 81.8% do not keep statistics on arrangement
- 80.0% do not keep statistics on description
- 54.5% do not keep statistics on creating and encoding finding aids
- 49.1% do not keep statistics on digitization
- 88.9% do not keep statistics on box labeling and bar coding

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MFSQKZX

Screenshots…

…Database Tables

…Daily Tracking

…Box-Level Tracking

…Series-Level Tracking

Arial | 8 | **B** *I* U

File   Edit   View   Insert   Format   Records   Tools   Window   Help   Type a question for help

Collection Level Tracking Form

COLLECTION LEVEL TRACKING

record_id Collection Name

1 | Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)

Collection Contents	**DESCRIPTIVE PRODUCTS CHECKLIST**

Includes correspondence, court reports and transcripts, news clippings, administrative records, article drafts, reports, meeting minutes, committee records, conference materials, lectures and speeches, notes, military records, medical notebooks, research data, charts, drawings, and photographs resulting from Butler's activities as a physician, lecturer, professor, and contributing member of professional organizations in Massachusetts,

FOLDER LISTING	**MARC21**
Folder Listed? ☑	**Record Updated?** ☑

Start Volume	**End Volume**	**Initial Review Complete?**	**Start Date For Initial Processing Plan**	**End Date for Initial Processing Plan**
8	8	☑	06-Apr-09	14-Apr-09

Folder Listing Start Date	**Date Done**
21-Apr-09	28-May-09

Arrangement Prior to Processing

The collection had little to no arrangement prior to processing.

Folder Listing End Date	**EAD**
11-May-09	**EAD FA Done?**
Total Days Folder Listing ☑	
2	**FA Date Done**

Condition of Collection Prior to Processing

Overall, the paper in the collection is in fair condition. There are rusty paper clips and staples as well as some plastic fasteners. The folders are tattered and worn, and there are several groups of records in plastic bags. There are very few newspaper clippings that are causing damage to adjacent papers, and will need to be photocopied

DSPACE	03-Jun-09
Folder List Deposited? ☑	**Date To Test**

Summary of Processing Approach

Since no clear arrangement was present, I based the processing plan loosely around his CV, since he performed multiple activities based only on the appointment he held at the time. Most papers related to his political activities, namely the subversive citizen's trials and health care reform. So I proposed to organize the papers in series according to his primary activities--professional, research, and political--and arrange them either alphbetically or chronologically, depending on the series.

Date FL List Deposited	**Date to Production**
20-May-09	30-Jul-09
DSpace Coll Rec Done? ☑	

Arrangement Post Processing

Entire collection will be processed at level II-B (folder level)
I. Professional Records—organized alphabetically by institution, folders within subseries arranged alphabetically by folder title
A. Agency for International Development, U.S. State Department

Date Coll Rec Done
04-Jun-09

Condition of Collection Post Processing

Rusty paper clips and staples were removed, plastic fasteners were left as is. The collection was rehoused in acid-free folders and boxes. Records in plastic bags were removed and foldered and newspaper clippings were photocopied. All reprints were discarded.

Sample Digital Objects Deposited? ☑

Post-Listing Comments - Project Archivist

The Butler collection had little to no arrangement, but several series emerged after reviewing the materials. Due to the method used to process the papers, it was difficult to come up with a name index for the finding aid, as well as to identify the restricted records. I gave the processing assistants instructions to flag any restricted material (and information on what is considered a personal or university record), but it may be that some restricted

Describe Objects Deposited

Scans by digital id. Additional information available in CHoM scanning log. 0000582 - Letter to Butler from Edward M. Kennedy; 0000580 - Letter to Butler from Vice President Richard Nixon; 0000581 - Letter to Butler from John F. Kennedy; 0000583 - Letter to Butler from Betty Ford; 0000584- Butler's Field Appointment for the American Expeditionary Forces; 0000585 - Postcard of Butler in the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I; 0000586 - Postcard of Captain Butler on leave in the French Riviera; 0000587 - Postcard of Captain Butler on leave in the

Post-Listing Comments - Processing Assistant 1

Post-Processing Comments - Processing Assistant 2

(Cheryl) A.M.B. collection lacked any clear organization when it first arrived. It was necessary to rearrange it into series and then arrange the folders within each series, either alphabetically or chronologically. Michael did the bulk of the arranging. The most difficult part was determing the sequence of activities, i.e. refoldering, preservation, boxlisting - etc., most benifical to capturing the metrics necc. for this project. For instance while refoldering I had to go

Complexity Ranking | 3: Moderately complex

Record: ◄◄ ◄ 3 ► ►► ►* of 15

Form View   NUM

…Collection-Level Tracking

<u>STATISTICS</u>

"Small" Collection

<u>Allan Macy Butler Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)</u> **= 80.75 hours for 7.5 cubic feet**

• Collection Review and Processing Planning	=	16.00 hours
• Refoldering	=	17.00
• Folder Listing	=	06.00
• Rearranging	=	06.00
• Decription	=	25.00
• Preservation Photocopying	=	03.00
• Preservation Tasks (Misc.)	=	03.00
• Barcoding and Labeling	=	01.00
• Project Tracking	=	03.75

Project archivist = 48.50 hours
Part time employee/LHT =
32.25

Average amount of time per cubic foot: 10.75 hours

"Large" Collection

<u>Baumgartner, Leona, 1902-. Papers, 1930-1975 (bulk). (H MS c305)</u> **= 396.25 hours for 89 cubic feet**

• Collection Review and Processing Planning	=	74.50 hours
• Refoldering	=	104.50
• Folder Listing	=	90.50
• Rearranging	=	31.75
• Reboxing	=	02.00
• Decription	=	21.00
• Digitization	=	07.50
• Preservation Photocopying	=	26.75
• Preservation Tasks (Misc.)	=	28.50
• Barcoding and Labeling	=	00.50
• Project Tracking	=	08.75

Project archivist = 109.50 hours
Part time employee/LHT 1 =
188.50

Part time employee/LHT 2 = 098.25

Average amount of time per cubic foot: 4.5 hours

"Small" Collection by Series

Allan Macy Butler Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313) **= 7.5 cubic feet**

Series 1: Professional Records	1.50 cubic feet	4.25 hours
Series 2: Research Records	0.75	1.00
Series 3: Lecture, Speech, and Conference Files	0.25	1.00
Series 4: Activism and Political Activities Records	3.00	4.25
Series 5: Writings and Publications	1.00	1.75
Series 6: Correspondence	0.50	1.50
Series 7: Personal Records	0.50	1.25

Total number of folders in collection: **208**

Average time: 2 hours per cubic foot

* Does **NOT** include collection review, processing plan, description, and digitization.

"Large" Collection by Series

Baumgartner, Leona, 1902-. Papers, 1930-1975 (bulk). (H MS c305) **= 89 cubic feet**

Series 1: Professional Activities Records	12 cubic feet	27.25 hours	
Series 2: Professional Correspondence and Working Files	27	88.25	
Series 3: Speeches, Conferences, Lectures and Related Records		18	35.75
Series 4: Writings and Publications	13	44.25	
Series 5: Personal Records	19	55.50	

Total number of folders in collection: **3342**

Average time: 30 - 40 minutes per cubic foot

* Does **NOT** include collection review, processing plan, description, and digitization.

Assumptions

Useful for estimating workflow for collections when the following conditions apply:

- Similar accessioning procedures
- Similar physical condition
- Similar types of records
- Minimal presence of analog/digital video, recordings, records, etc. (anything not paper-based)

We have started to use this database to track the work of our individual processing archivists (those <u>not</u> working in teams) and on different types of collections of varying sizes to compare results.

This will enable us to create a "matrix" of conditions for ranking average amounts of time to do what.

Why?

- More accurate estimates regarding the amount of time to process collections

- More accurate estimates for the type of staffing needed per project

- More accurate estimates for the amount of time it takes to process different types of records

- More accurate preservation statistics

- More accurate budget and grant proposal development
  - Number of hours on average needed for professional staff
  - Number of hours on average for LHTS/paraprofessionals/grad students
  - More realistic assessment of how project labor can be divided

- Return on investment
  - We need to think about the relationship between our investment in description and how useful that description is to researchers
  - What is the cost – in time and money – of providing access

Scholarly Engagement Study

Qualitative and quantitative assessment underway regarding the delivery of folder lists in advance of full finding aids:

•   Study exercise and post-exercise interview administered to new and experienced researchers, public health professionals, public health graduate students, and information professionals

•   Research/reading room survey questionnaire containing questions from part one of exercise regarding access preferences

One response:

This is a very difficult choice for an archivist, who also happens to do some research. While I think that providing researchers with bibliographic data and administrative history, as well as some sense of the organization and history of the ownership of the collection, is useful and eventually necessary, it is more immediately important to provide access.

Thank you!

_emily_gustainis@hms.harvard.edu_