

## Turning theory into practice

### top down approach

ARCHIDIS 2011  
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1

## XXXV<sup>th</sup> CITRA (2001)

Appraisal and selection has become imperative for reasons related as much to the growth of the mass of records created and to the redundancy and ephemeral nature of much information, as to the material and financial constraints.



2

## paper >>> born digital

Individual examination of records is unsuitable for dealing with the large volume of records created since photocopiers, word processors and computers became part of everyday office life.

New technology demands that we make selection decisions at the earliest possible stage.



3

## Canada

Macro appraisal attempts to capture the significant activities of government and its interaction with the society in which it exists.

Archivists “seek to understand why records were created rather than what they contain, how they were created and used by their original users rather than how they might be used in the future, and what formal functions and mandates of the creator they supported rather than what internal structure or physical characteristics they may or may not have.”



It is the functional context of creation and contemporary use that determines value, it is a **provenance-based approach** to appraisal.

Because it looks first at functions rather than records, it has been called a “**top down**” approach. Because appraisal has traditionally been focused on the value of records, this approach, which focuses first the value of functions, has been called “**macroappraisal**.”



5

## David Bearman

“the secret to appraising records is to put a bag over them, and focus on the context of their creation.”



6

## Macro

- What does 'macro' mean?
- On what levels can macro-appraisal be used?
- Appraisal guidelines in your country ... feasible in practice ?
- Can macro-appraisal be combined with micro-appraisal?
- Macro in a paper world >>> macro in an electronic environment: point out some differences



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## Informational values

- Is there still a place for content or is it only context that counts?
- (How) can research values be included in macro-appraisal decisions?



8

## Individual rights

How to deal with personal data (in case files): the right to social memory < > the right to social oblivion.



9

### Destroying records is an act of vandalism

version  
Greg De Moore  
November 30, 2010  
OPINION

Comments

I don't believe any psychiatric records should be destroyed. A 21st-century solution is obvious - scan them and store them digitally. The entire Rozelle hospital collection could have been saved on compact discs and kept in a hatbox. No problems with space; no fire hazard to torment an administrator. But not now, because they're all gone.

The period from 1960 through to 1990 covers a critical period in psychiatry. The first great wave of new medications came into being during the late 1950s allowing many patients to be discharged from hospital. This momentous change - recorded in the lives of the thousands of patients that flowed from beyond the asylums' gates and into the community - is now largely unrecorded. This medical and political move to discharge patients into the community - de-institutionalisation - has largely been lost to the historian.



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