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## the status and future of Canada's libraries and archives

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Jessica MacQueen:

I am unable to attend the session being held in Winnipeg today, but would like the following notes to go forward to the committee. thanks very much

Framing Questions:

Services

1. Archives in particular provide excellent service to all Canadians, often locating and making available records that contain information critical to addressing human rights concerns, social and economic imbalances and government programming that may have caused injury or damage to a given population. Apart from topical or political issues, archives also support the creation of art and literature, and encourage community through the acquisition of materials created by Canadians from all walks of life, famous and not so famous. Services generally provided by archives support researchers in the process of discovery – that is, records are made available and researchers broaden their understanding of an issue/person/community through exposure to materials in archival collections.
2. Archives measure service outcomes by a pure count of services provided (i.e. 6,000 items requested, 4,000 copies requested, 10,000 hits on a website and 6,000 downloads of an item). The intangible value of acquiring and providing access to a wide range of records created by Canadians is difficult to quantify. One researcher may produce a book that reaches 10,000 individuals – how do you quantify the impact of that book on each reader?
3. Not certain what is meant by the term “research data”. If it means digital data sets, then libraries are an appropriate institution to house the information. If the term is meant to be more holistic, if research data includes information relating to the terms of data collection and the motivation of the data collector, archives may be appropriate in that they document all of these aspects of the “record” through the acquisition and description process.

Community Outreach and Awareness

1. We use our website and physical exhibits in strategic locations and to provide information to the public and to researchers who may benefit by using our collection.
2. Services provided directly to users include research assistance and facilitation and copying of records

requested. We count volume of inquiries and provide copies within a specific time limit (we do not at this time survey users for satisfaction or the like).

3. Archives typically provide researchers with online research tools that point them at records held by the institution. Some archives are further along in providing actual digital copies of records. Infrastructure to facilitate the creation of digital copies of holdings is complex and not many small/medium size archives are equipped or positioned to meet this expectation.

4. Archives are an important institution for memory building in that they acquire records reflective of society, provide access to these records without imposing meaning (researchers access original records and interpret based on their experience).

## Digitation

1. For my archives (municipal) we are not staffed to develop a program to receive born digital records.

2. There will always be some records that are best accessed in their original form. That said, archives and other similar institutions are well-placed to become centres for learning and for building community through programming developed from the records we hold.

## Education

1. Able to adapt, technologically sophisticated, people oriented, politically savvy

2. Competencies are typically used these days when defining job responsibilities, etc. Professional training and education should be aware of these competencies and look for ways to align technical and theoretical training to the job expectations (i.e. things like citizen/customer focus; respect for diversity; and results orientation).

## Resources

1. Partnering across disciplines (libraries, archives, museums, galleries and educational institutions working together toward larger objectives). The issue of funding for municipal institutions is a critical one, always short of money at this level of government even though we are directly in touch with our users, face to face as it were.

2. Attract funding by developing projects that connect with public imagination but which contain a legacy component so that when complete, the archives is left with useable technology (i.e. trusted digital repository created to hold records of the truth and reconciliation commission scaleable to meet broader community needs for acquisition and provision of access to digital records).

3. For my own institution, we would be properly housed – that is, in a building that supports our program. Staffing would be increased marginally by 2 line archivist positions to push forward backlog reduction through appraisal/processing and to develop public active programming specifically on civics for primary and secondary schools (target audiences). We would be ingesting digital records in partnership with corporate IT (including appropriate private collections). We would be a recognized centre of excellence.

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