

## Comparison of Jenkinson's and Schellenberg's Views on Appraisal and Valuation

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Schellenberg and Jenkinson are both concerned with the sheer volume of archival materials being generated in their respective time periods, and with the fact that this bulk might ultimately render the materials unusable. Jenkinson noted that the availability of materials and ease of duplication (typewriters, carbon paper, etc.) had resulted in a "slipshod manner of Archive making and keeping" (Jenkinson, p. 138) where no consideration was given to whether duplicate copies would (or should) be made or retained, and the problem was presumably much worse in Schellenberg's day, with the advent of photocopying and other electronic means of duplication. Both were concerned for the future accessibility (or "discoverability", to use a more modern term) of materials, although Jenkinson's focus was more on the future archivist himself, while Schellenberg's arguably showed somewhat more concern for researchers and historians of the future.

The difference between the viewpoints of the two on practices for selection, appraisal, and destruction, however, is fairly apparent. Jenkinson's approach is clearly more "hands off" in nature, given his notion- of the "purity" of archives. When discussing archives of the past, he ultimately concludes that the "destruction of any of the Archives we have received from the past is a course that a conscientious Archivist must find it difficult to commend" (Jenkinson, p. 145); it is not the place of the archivist to make judgments about the future value of a document, but merely to preserve the integrity of the documents and make them available to future generations. Only in the case of word-for-word duplicates is destruction clearly permissible; and even defining what constitutes a duplicate is no simple task. As for current acquisitions, Jenkinson assumes that the "weeding" of documents should be done by the organization that produces them, prior to their being deposited in the archives; the "administrator" or "archive maker" is responsible for the selection, providing a complete a record of important proceedings while simultaneously preserving "as little as

possible” (Jenkinson, p. 152), and must not consider “hypothetical needs of future historian. The archivist is not a selector, nor the final arbiter, but more of a custodian of the received.

Schellenberg, however, suggests a more active role for the archivist, one somewhat more akin to the role of collection management in a library setting. His focus is more user-centered, and recognizes the value of “evidential” vs. “informational” value, and the idea that records may be valuable for multiple reasons and not just the ones for which they were initially created. After assessing the uniqueness and form of the materials, Jenkinson suggests that not only must the archivist make judgments about the importance of records to be preserved, but that she must also consider consulting other subject experts, which would seem to be in direct contrast to Jenkinson’s notion that consultation with historians might result in some sort of fatal bias. Where Jenkinson calls for consistency over time -- “the Archives of the future must have the same qualities as those of the past” (Jenkinson, p. 152) -- Schellenberg states that there can be no “exact standards” and therefore no presumption of consistency, and that the archivist must rely on “moderation and common sense” (Schellenberg, p. 68). The “moderator” approach, central to Schellenberg’s view also requires examining documents in relation to the entire body of information on a subject in order to determine its relative importance, and also weighing the allocation of limited funds for preservation based on this relative importance.

Both approaches have some validity today as well, despite technological advances in management and finding aids. One good example would be the preservation of email threads; no two “series” are really identical, despite having initiated from one sender’s message to multiple recipients, as individual recipients to go in separate directions through further discussion with other recipients, etc. A future Jenkinsonian would presumably advocate preserving all variations, while a future disciple of Schellenberg might be more inclined toward evaluation and selection.