



The **Archivists Round Table**
of Metropolitan New York, Inc.



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Call for Participation: Part I - Archives in the Electronic Age

The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (A.R.T.) is organizing a two-part series on the topic of *Archives in the Electronic Age*. The events will be co-sponsored by the Cardozo Data Law Initiative and The Sedona Conference®. Part I will be held on June 24, 2015 with Part II scheduled for the evening of October 1, 2015 as a part of Cardozo Tech Talks.

This call for participation is for the June program. The course of life does not change arbitrarily, it evolves. Innovations do not occur in a vacuum, but are informed by an awareness of the past and are inspired by a vision of the future. The role of archivists has evolved dramatically during the twentieth century, due to an expanded awareness of the value of documents and materials, a growth in the diversification of subjects requiring archival administration, advances in technologies, and an ever-increasing demand for information of all kinds.

Along the way, new categories of data and types of storage offer new problems to be solved, questions to be answered. If the majority of humankind's collective knowledge is to become computerized—or eventually redefined by some technology not yet known—how will this affect our access to and understanding of the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that forms the complete picture of our civilization? After all, aren't computers merely another kind of storage container for documents, in some sense no different from those "air-tight metallic containers" used in Ohio in the early 1800s? Or do they offer a fundamental challenge to the way we work, think, and relate to one another?

The day will cover issues that might confront archivists and records information management personnel as records are created or converted into electronic format. The forum will focus on presentations and panel discussions, studies, strategies, research, analyses, and use studies with the aim of bringing together archivists, industry experts, records managers, librarians, museum professionals, professors, scholars, academic researchers and the general public. The day will be broken up into four one-hour sessions.

CASE STUDY ONE

A public entity as well as a private organization stored significant volumes of archival materials in a warehouse in New York City. The warehouse burned down and all of the archival materials stored by the two entities were destroyed. This unfortunate and unforeseeable event led to the following questions that were posed to the archivists by their governing bodies:

- Exactly what was destroyed?
- Were the archived materials duplicated and stored anywhere else?
- Assuming that the materials were duplicated in electronic format, are these duplicates available to the public?

CASE STUDY TWO

During a review of its collection, a private entity noted that it has maintained several hundred VHS tapes. Unfortunately, the labeling on the majority of these tapes has fallen off or become unreadable. However, the extant labeling describes that the corresponding tapes contain recordings of events presented by the entity.

These recordings fall within the definition of the entity's archival materials. However, the entity cannot play the tapes. A number of questions have been posed to the archivist by her governing body:

- Based on what the archivist knows, do all the tapes contain recordings of events?
- If that question cannot be answered, what can or should the archivist do to enable her to learn whether all the tapes contain recordings of event?
- Should the entity discard all or some of the tapes and, if not, what should be done to transfer the contents of the tapes to a readable format?

CASE STUDY THREE

The governing bodies of a private entity has decided to digitize all of its archives and, once having done so, intends to store and preserve all the "original" archival materials that the archivist deems to be "historically relevant." The governing body has also decided that, given the significant presence of the entity on social media and through its website, that everything on those media channels should be deemed archival in nature and preserved by the entity. A number of questions have been posed to the archivist by his governing body:

- How will the archivist decide what is "historically relevant?"
- How will the archivist preserve the content of the social media and the website?
- How will the archivist ensure that, however the archives are digitized, the resulting digitized materials remain accessible over the next 20 years? (The archivist plans to retire in 5 years).

CASE STUDY FOUR

The governor of a state has signed an executive order that will require the state archivist to define the content of interactive websites maintained by the state as archival materials and to preserve all such content for twenty years. However, the governor intends to propose legislation which will amend the state's public records law to provide that preserved content need only be produced in response to public records requests in PDF format. A number of questions have been posed to the state archivist by the governor (who is, incidentally, a strong advocate of access to public records):

- What technical issues might arise from requirement that content be preserved?
- What will preservation cost?
- What are the pros and cons, if any, in production of content in the selected format?

Guidelines:

- Original content is required, with the possibility of paper being included in *The Sedona Conference® Journal*.
- All individual presentations will be a maximum 20 minutes long, leaving time for panel introductions and Q&A. Individual or entire panel proposals will be considered.
- Submissions must include: title, name of author and institutional affiliation, email address, phone number, abstract (250 words max) and technological requirements.

Deadline: June 1, 2015 for Abstracts, Papers and Presentations
Email to education@nycarchivists.org

Event Date: June 24, 2015

Time: TBD

Location: Cardozo Law School, 55 Fifth Avenue @ 12th Street, New York, NY 10003