RE-CREATING THE EDITORIAL PROCESS:
A CASE STUDY IN ARCHIVAL DECISION-MAKING

by

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ii

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ABSTRACT

This report examines the creation of archival records in a publishing setting and discusses the ramifications of the decision-making process through which historical evidence comes to be preserved. As the central source of primary material for historical research, archives are an invaluable resource in the quest to uncover the past. However, far from being an objective record, archival materials are created through an interpretative process. In order to distill an accurate yet concise representation of the editorial workflow, the selectivity inherent in archival work plays a part in the writing of literary history. The following is a case study of archival decision-making, based upon the preparation of editorial files at D&M Publishers Inc. for shipment to the Simon Fraser University Library archives. Recommendations are offered to publishers hoping to amend their record-keeping practices through following standard archival procedures.

Keywords: Archive; Archiving; Editorial Files; Historiography; History; Literary Archives; Publishing; Publishing Archives; Publishing History.

For my parents:

your patience knows no bounds.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

> *…I heard the books' voices: a low, steady, unsuppressible hum. I'd heard it many times before. I've always had a finely tuned ear for a library's accumulations of echo and desire.*
>
> -Martha Cooley, *The Archivist*[1]

What accurate poetry is "a library's accumulations of echo and desire," in particular in speaking of archives! Collections of reverberations of the past, fragile remnants of days gone by in the form of letters, photographs, bills, and manuscripts, having escaped the ravages of time through mere chance or perhaps through the cautious foresight of some unnamed antiquarian. For those of us fascinated by the events and characters of the past, the archive holds the promise of endless discovery. Perhaps even more than what archives actually contain, it is the potential of what they *could* hold that fascinates the researcher. The curiosity to uncover the secrets of the past is what drives archival research – but only for those with the determination to endure days or weeks of potentially unrewarding toil before finding what they are looking for, if they do find it.

How strange it is that the past comes to rest, secure in a line of sterile boxes on orderly shelves, in such a hermetic environment. For, as Martha Cooley's quote suggests, the contents of archives are indeed alive, in that they contain the thoughts, memories, and experiences of those who created them. The most intimate details of a person's life – love letters, diaries, family photographs, bank statements, unfinished drafts of work – may be laid out to for all to see if they are deemed to be worth keeping. There is a thrill of voyeurism in looking at such documents, the almost guilty pleasure of seeing something one is not meant to see. These deeply personal documents may not have been intended to last more than a lifetime, yet because they contain something that future generations can learn from, they will serve purposes that their creators may never have intended them to. The voices held within those pages, heard by Cooley's archivist, are given new life in their preservation.

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[1] Cooley, *The Archivist* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 287.

1.1 *Archives in the Popular Imagination*

Although it may seem strange to anyone who has visited an actual archive – calm, clean, and orderly – a much more intriguing archive exists in the popular imagination. There is a certain kind of romance associated with the collection of historical arcana, for the romance of the archives is one of untold potential. Entire rooms filled with nothing but paper trivia could contain the keys to unlocking the past and hold the promise of unlimited discovery to the historical sleuth. Informed by literature and film, the image of the archive that many people would subscribe to is far different than what one would find walking into an existing archive. From humdrum "…images of dusty, musty storage shelves full of fading papers and old photographs," cared for by archivists that "wear little brown bow ties and never speak above a whisper,"[2] to murderous monks jealously guarding centuries-old parchment in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*,[3] archives evoke an almost iconic imagery. Perhaps this is because the closest most people come to visiting an archive is through film or literature.

Here we have the perfect makings of a romantic thriller: long-lost evidence, single-minded obsession to uncover the truth, hard work and ingenuity paid off by the uncovering of old secrets. Perhaps this is the reason that archives often serve as a romantic plot device in novels. In several genres, these tales use libraries and archives as critical settings in which a story unfolds, with archival research at the crux of the plotline.[4] They are the ideal setting for mystery novels, as archives are filled with a wealth of historical evidence, perhaps waiting for decades to be discovered. Apparently, they can also kindle romance, as they did for the two researchers of A.S. Byatt's novel *Possession*,[5] in which a couple comes together out of a shared passion to seek out the truth about a centuries-old affair. Or Martha Cooley's *The Archivist*,[6] in which an archivist caring for confidential T.S. Eliot files finds himself drawn to a young poet who insists on being

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[2] Laura Millar, *The Story Behind the Book: Preserving Authors' and Publishers' Archives* (Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing Press, 2009), 23.

[3] Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983).

[4] Suzanne Keen, *Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 3.

[5] Byatt, *Possession: A Romance* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1990).

shown letters that are not supposed to see the light of day for decades. At times the romance takes the form of a love for literature, such as Travis Holland's *The Archivist's Story*,[7] in which a Soviet archivist attempts to save cherished manuscripts that he has been ordered to destroy. The archives of these stories are filled with mystery and intrigue; characters are brought together in the quest for knowledge and are forced to challenge those who benefit from hiding the secrets of the past.

As well as in fiction, we find this romanticism amongst scholars – the people most likely to visit actual archives. According to John H. Arnold, as a student of history he was taught that historians are like detectives investigating a crime.[8] For what could be more enticing to a fresh crop of students than the promise of uncovering boxed mysteries? However, remodelling the historian into Sam Spade has the same effect as portraying the archaeologist as Indiana Jones – thrilling, yet far from the truth of what the work entails. The image of researchers hunched over ancient books, blowing inches of dust off each item pulled off of the shelves, would make for a deliciously moody film set, but in reality most archives could not be more different from this construction. Despite this, even when speaking from personal experience, researchers tend to impart an element of mystery to the archives. Archival research has been likened to entering a labyrinth, as "a maze of false starts and dead ends."[9] Indeed, as my supervisor astutely warned me before beginning the research for this report, there is always the danger of entering the archive and never finding your way back out. Searching for a definitive truth can be all-consuming if the desire to know is compulsive enough – and such a search could be endless with the amount of information available. Not only is there a chance of never finding exactly what one is looking for, but to the curious mind there are infinite tangents to get lost in. "The more I read, the more the horizon marking some mythical completion of my project receded…"[10]

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[6] Cooley, *The Archivist.*
[7] Travis Holland, *The Archivist's Story* (New York: Dial Press, 2007).
[8] Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction,* Very Short Introductions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 44.
[9] David L. Jacobs, "Labyrinths," in *Labyrinths: Essays on Using Archives,* Center for Creative Photography, The Archive 23 (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 1986), 17.
[10] Ibid., 23.

The compulsion to search is well documented in literature, particularly in Carolyn Steedman's *Dust*, in which the author describes the fanaticism, akin to an illness, with which historians research the archives. From the anxiety felt by the researcher when faced with stacks of trivial details and not enough time to sort through them, to the stress of days of travelling and sleeping in strange beds,[11] the quest for knowledge can be a strenuous one. Although this illness can be taken as a metaphor of obsession, it can also be a physical form of sickness as a result of too many hours spent in close quarters with the dust and debris of old parchment and papers.[12] However, the more common ailment is the obsessive compulsion that can accompany archival research – the need to *know*. This archive fever (as the title of Jacques Derrida's *Mal d'archive* has inaccurately been translated) is born of the need to possess the origin of things – portrayed as a sickness because such a possession would be impossible.[13] Such origins stretch back far beyond the collective memory or the contents of archives; it would be impossible to trace the true origins of culture. The unhealthy obsession with physical manifestations of the past was sarcastically rendered by John Earle in 1628 in his description of the antiquarian: "one that hath that unnatuall disease to bee enamour'd of old age, and wrinckles, and loves all things (as Dutchmen doe cheese) the better for being mouldy and worme-eatern."[14] Indeed, the archival profession grew out of this very disease: an appreciation for the objects of the past. There is a kind of magic that resides in old things. Holding an object that was created centuries before one was born serves as a connection to the past, a link between the holder and its long-dead creator. This attachment is even more profound in the case of the writings and personal effects of a historical figure one admires. One researcher described the experience as follows: "these manuscripts become like… art objects. They have a strange kind of aura about them. It is a bit like seeing the Mona Lisa or something – you know that this is unique and this is the only copy of its kind."[15] While

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[11] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust,* Encounters (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 18-19.

[12] Ibid., 28.

[13] Ibid., 3-6.

[14] Earle, *Microcosmographie*, 1628, quoted in Arnold, *History*, 37.

[15] Ulrika Maude (Senior Lecturer, Department of English Studies, Durham University), quoted in: Harry Ransom Center, *Ulrika Maude, University of Durham: "Perception, Textual Genetics and Aesthetics in the Work of Samuel Beckett,"* 2009, from Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin, "Fellows on

archive fever may teeter on the edge of unhealthy fanaticism, it may also be the driving force behind a good deal of historical research. In other words, it is a remarkably productive compulsion.

1.2 *The Importance of Archival Records to Historical Research*

In history, as in other social sciences, the use of primary sources (such as archival records) is championed as the scholarly ideal. Researchers are taught to seek out original sources to obtain unfiltered evidence upon which to base their research. This convention is often attributed to Leopold von Ranke, a nineteenth-century historian, who is credited with advising fellow historians to "avoid any invention and imagination…and keep strictly to the facts."[16] In other words, researchers were to base their writings upon primary sources as a means of achieving objectivity – a mantra that is still adhered to by many scholars today. However, there are conflicting opinions on the nature of truth in the historical record and on the idea that the past is knowable beyond mere interpretation. Over the last few decades, postmodern theory has been responsible for a paradigm shift as much in history as in other disciplines, although perhaps a less-welcomed one.[17]

The debate about objectivity in historical research rages on, but there is little argument that historians remain among the primary users of archives. As the central source of historical interpretation, primary materials such as archival records play a vital role in the way in which history is written. The selection and preservation of those records by archivists – in consideration of what will be of value to researchers in posterity – is partially responsible for what will be written, for the selection, care, and organization of the archival record determines what documents will remain to be researched. Just as historians interpret the past through the documents that remain, archivists interpret the

Fellowships: Video Interviews," MPEG,
http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/multimedia/video/2008/fellows/ulrika.html.
[16] Arnold, *History*, 34. Arnold, however, posits that the roots of using documentary evidence stretch back to the sixteenth century, 52.
[17] See, for example, Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists Are Murdering Our Past* (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

past through their selection of what shall remain. In a sense, the past as we know it is created through the processes that determine what evidence will be left to draw conclusions from – be it chance, natural disaster, political censorship, or archival selection. Hence the fundamental role that archival selection plays in the writing of history.

1.3 *History as Truth, History as Fiction?*

> *With a little effort, anything can be shown to connect with anything else: existence is infinitely cross-referenced. And everything has more than one definition.*
>
> -Martha Cooley, *The Archivist: A Novel*[18]

> *Since Ranke, historians of every hue have had first and foremost in their minds the idea of "truth" as something that can be approached or achieved through fidelity to their sources.*
>
> -John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*[19]

Romantic notions about the archive are based upon the researcher's discovery of the truth about the past – thus, the idea that there is an absolute truth to be discovered. Even after decades of postmodernist arguments to the contrary, in popular culture (and some academic circles), history continues to be perceived as a series of knowable facts and events, waiting to be discovered by the tireless researcher. The archive as a plot device in literature almost exclusively involves a hunt for the truth: "Though in a few special cases novelists deliberately invoke deconstructive or Foucauldian associations of the archive, mainly they imagine archives as places containing books and papers, vital settings for the adventure plots in which research questers seek the truth."[20] That the past is static and consists of knowable truths is itself a romantic notion. Just as the events we live through in the present are open to as many interpretations as there are people in the world, so too were the events of the past. In the Information Age, the jumble of conflicting voices

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[18] Cooley, *The Archivist*, 3.
[19] Arnold, *History*, 54.
[20] Keen, *Romances of the Archive*, 10.

describing statistics, events, and political opinions is overwhelming; sources from the past were subject to the same biases – including those that remain as archival sources. From the influence of the writer creating the record, to that of the archivist selecting the record to be kept and organizing it into research categories, to that of the researcher interpreting the record as representative of the past, there are many stages of subjectivity in writing history. At a basic level, understanding the interpretive nature of historical research requires acknowledging the difference between the events of the past and written accounts of those events. "This disjunction between 'the past' and 'history' is the common condition of the relationship between the world (past and present) and words… But still there is, even among the most aware of historians, a deep-seated desire to *reconstruct* the past as it really was… instead of acknowledging that you cannot reveal the truth about a representation, for that, plainly, is what history *actually* is."[21]

This debate amongst researchers has been well publicized, and countless books and articles have been devoted to the issue. Less widely known is the opinion of archivists and collection managers. As professionals who have devoted their careers to the care and maintenance of archival records, they can offer a unique, and perhaps more astute, assessment of the situation. Even the caretakers of our material past count among their ranks those who accept a level of subjectivity in the interpretation of historical materials and who acknowledge that the records of the past will remain mute if not seen from the right angle. "This is the paradox of archival materials. As the material residue of the past, it functions like theatrical scrim; now opaque, but in the right light, opening up to our understanding and interpretation."[22] So many of the accounts of archive users suggest a similar experience. Given the thousands of documents detailing the minutiae of everyday life in past centuries, it is a wonder that any substantial revelations can come from archival work. Yet, given the time and desire, archival work can grant surprising insights into the past, if seen in the right light.

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[21] Alun Munslow, "Introduction: Theory and Practice," in *Experiments in Rethinking History*, eds. Alun Munslow and Robert A. Rosenstone (New York: Routledge, 2004), 8.
[22] Amy Stark, "The Smoking Gun and Other Archival Fallacies," in *Labyrinths*, Center for Creative Photography, 5.

1.4 *A Case Study in Archival Decision-Making*

As a student in Simon Fraser University's Master of Publishing program, I spent the summer of 2008 as an intern at D&M Publishers Inc. (formerly Douglas & McIntyre Publishing). Over the course of four months I assisted the editorial and marketing departments in a variety of tasks, including sorting through the editorial and production files of books that had been published in previous seasons. Ordinarily the responsibility of one of the in-house editors or editorial assistants, the task fell on me that year, as the assigned editor was preparing to go on leave. Despite the wide-ranging nature of the projects that I worked on that summer, the process of sorting through editorial files for donation to the SFU archives was of particular interest to me because of my fascination with historical research. To me, this task was living proof of the subjective nature of the archival record, hence of the historical accounts that are written based upon it. Although it was a routine duty at the publishing house, the responsibility weighed heavily upon me, because each file that was recycled would be effectively erased from the historical record.

This report summarizes my experience as an amateur archivist during my internship at D&M. Presented as a case study, it demonstrates the process of creating archival records in a publishing setting and discusses the ramifications of the decision-making process through which historical evidence comes to be preserved. Against a background of archival theory, I present the argument that archival selection is one of many examples of subjective process in the writing of history. Rather than existing as an objective and complete record of events past, archival files are culled and curated to meet anticipated future research needs. Along the way, the archivist encounters many turning points, when he or she finds material that is of questionable value and must make a decision as to its fate. In examining these and the related issues I encountered while sorting through editorial files, which led to larger questions in the field of publishing archives, I compiled several recommendations, which are offered here to publishers hoping to amend their record-keeping practices by following standard archival procedures.

2. ARCHIVAL FUNDAMENTALS

2.1 *The Basics*

The term *archive* has several meanings: it refers at once to a collection of archival documents (in a public or private collection), to a facility in which archives are kept, and to the act of processing documents for long-term storage.[23] Archives may be public, such as those in a university library; or private, such as the files a company keeps on site for reference, or the records an author keeps of drafts and other previous work. Some collections are managed by trained archivists, while others are the result of a records-management program administered by office managers. The term *archive* may refer to public records offices, government, or business storage facilities, yet there are also archives devoted to the collection of literature, photographs, artwork, and many other materials. In the most basic definition of the verb *to archive*, referring to the act of creating archival records, information becomes institutionalized[24] as it moves from the private holdings of a company or individual to a collection that is intended for public access. Reflecting this definition, the majority of research collections are held by public institutions.

At the centre of the archival process is the notion of posterity. In caring for a culture's material past, archivists perform a much-needed service to society. Information is amassed for the public good, largely just in case it is ever needed. Excellent private collections exist worldwide; many of them sit somewhere between private and public, in that owners may give scholars, writers, and museums access to their collections.[25] Private collectors do play an important role in the preservation of historical materials and may eventually donate their collection to public institutions (often posthumously), but the owners do not necessarily share the archival goal of providing scholars with access to their collections. The archival profession is one of cautious care, involving an awareness of the worth of historical artifacts and the desire to tend to their preservation. Yet it also relies

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[23] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 25.
[24] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4.

upon systems of organization to make sense of this muddle of varying documents so that they will be useful to researchers and the public. Caring for archival materials involves achieving a balance between preservation and access. A record that has been preserved in perfect condition for centuries is of no value if no one can access it. Whereas a private collector seeks to own objects of great value, archivists seek to put such objects in use. Archivists take great pride in their work, as indeed they should, for they are custodians and curators of our material past.

As centres for research and the heart of scholarly communities, universities may be the ideal location for literary archives. Many universities house renowned archives, such as those at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas and the archives held at the University of Reading library, in England. These two archives are well known not only for the contents of their archives, but also for their exceptional archival practices.

Measures are taken in all archives to maintain collections adequately, but in contrast to the renowned institutions mentioned above, many other facilities in the world operate on a much smaller budget. Chronically underfunded, most archives have few resources to devote to keeping their collections in tip-top shape. In the face of shrinking budgets and growing collections, archival holdings can become unwieldy, disorganized, or vulnerable to deterioration. Archivists and librarians certainly make their best effort to care for their collections, but many of them are limited by a lack of funding, staff, technology, and/or space.

2.2 *The Importance of Selectivity in the Record*

One of the central means of keeping an institution's collection manageable is to limit what is acquired. Selectivity in acquisitions limits the size of the collection, reducing the resources devoted to it; simplifies the process of accessing the contents of the collection; and provides an identity to the collection, ultimately increasing the value of the archive to researchers. For instance, an archive may have several collections that focus upon a geographic area, a time period, or a particular author. Researchers, who

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[25] Joseph L. Sax, *Playing Darts with a Rembrandt: Public and Private Rights in Cultural Treasures* (Ann Arbor: The

themselves are quite specialized in their interests, can make better use of an institution that houses an abundance of material on their topic of focus. Therefore, a great deal of effort goes into curating archival holdings through the development of an acquisition policy and the appraisal of donated records.

So central is the selection process to the act of archiving that it has been said that "all archival work depends on archivists meeting their primary obligation: identifying and selecting that small percentage of records whose enduring research value makes them worthy of continuing preservation."[26] Small indeed is this portion of records worth keeping, typically less than 5 percent of the total records produced by a business or government and less than 15 percent of those created by an individual.[27] Some critics may wonder why such a small percentage of records should be kept, but archivists are well aware of the dangers of keeping too much information: "Careful selection is essential because the huge volume of records produced, especially in our modern, information-rich society, makes it impossible to retain everything. Even were this possible from a cost and storage capacity standpoint, it would defeat its own central purpose, for the volume and complexity would make it difficult or impossible for researchers to locate and retrieve needed information."[28]

Rather than keeping a complete (and therefore objective) record of the past, archivists are engaged in "creating a usable past," a term coined by the World War I-era American historian Van Wyck Brooks.[29] Although his notion that a usable past involves asking oneself, "What is important for us? What… ought we elect to remember?"[30] contains a kernel of truth, archival appraisal is more complex and strategic than these two simple questions suggest. However, this process does begin with the question of what we find important: archivists must determine what types of materials are of interest to researchers at the moment and what kind of information will be of interest in the future. A record of the past must be usable, a condition that can be compromised by the glut of

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University of Michigan Press, 1999), 66.

[26] Bruce W. Dearstyne, *The Archival Enterprise: Modern Archival Principles, Practices, and Management Techniques* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1993), 101.

[27] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 52.

[28] Dearstyne, *The Archival Enterprise*, 101.

[29] Brooks, "On Creating a Usable Past," *The Dial*, 64, no. 7 (April 11, 1918): 337-341.

[30] Ibid., 340.

information that would remain if there were no selectivity in the archival record. A complete record of all documents created would be a more accurate representation of the past, but it would also be useless. The resources necessary to sift through this excess of information would be far more than any researcher could muster. There already exists a daunting amount of research on every imaginable topic; therefore, cautious judgment goes into each new acquisition an archive makes. Quantity is certainly less desirable than quality in archival records.

2.3 *The Destruction of Records*

Given the space limitations faced by any archive, coupled with the need for researchers to be able to find relevant information easily, archivists must limit the records that are collected to those that will be of historical value. Unfortunately, this may be more easily said than done, as it can be difficult to determine what will be of value to future researchers. As such, discriminating between records with value and records without must be approached with thought, caution, and flexibility – a combination that can be difficult to achieve if time is too limited to pore over each document. As Frank Boles makes clear, "An archivist who destroys records does so with the assumption that the information within those documents will be lost forever."[31] This can be a heavy cross to bear for someone who is devoted to preserving the past. However, as we have seen, with limited budgets and storage space, archives must be selective in what they collect. There are those purists who support an ethic of total preservation, but there is a consensus in the vast majority of the literature that some degree of filtration must occur. At the most basic level, there is the elimination of records that are redundant (such as multiple copies of a document) or ephemeral (documents that only have short-term value).[32] While in some cases it is easy to determine the redundancy of records, it is not so easy when, for instance, some copies of a document have been altered with handwriting.[33] Similarly, while ephemera, such as an office memo reminding staff of an upcoming statutory

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[31] Boles, *Archival Appraisal,* with Julia Marks Young (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1991), 1.
[32] Ibid., 3.
[33] Millar, *Story Behind the Book,* 62.

holiday, may lack long-term value, the future value of other records can be more difficult to predict. Unfortunately, with archival selection, as with most decisions in life, the process is rarely black and white.

2.4 *The Appraisal Process*

Determining the long-term value of information can be a treacherous task – one that must be approached with caution and with a clear set of criteria in mind. Such criteria are based on collection policies in archival facilities, which in turn are based on the identity of the organization and the judgment of those who established it. There are general guidelines that archivists will adhere to, but the specifics of collection vary from institution to institution. Much of the literature on archival methodology is devoted to how one decides what is of value. Various approaches can be taken: there are formulae for determining the quantitative worth of information, in the form of cost-benefit analysis;[34] there are sampling methods for when time is tight;[35] there are appraisal reports and checklists available to standardize the procedure.[36]

Archivist Bruce Dearstyne claims that the appraisal of records is "the most intellectually demanding part of archival work because it entails analysis, judgments of value, knowledge of research interests, and anticipation of future research trends"[37] – a demanding process indeed. Although archivists rely upon acquisition policies to standardize the appraisal process, an element of personal judgment also comes into play. In fact, the experience of the archivist goes a long way in determining the quality of the archival records left behind. The difference in the quality of information between similar types of records requires a great deal of interpretive effort on the part of the archivist, in particular in the appraisal of records relating to the creative process (as opposed to standardized administrative records, for example).

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[34] Boles, *Archival Appraisal.*
[35] Millar, "Story Behind the Book" (unpublished manuscript, 2008), 38.
[36] Dearstyne, "Identification and Selection of Historical Records," in *The Archival Enterprise,* 101-126.
[37] Ibid., 115.

To give an idea of the factors that an archivist must consider when appraising records, Dearstyne provides a list of considerations for judging the informational value of documents:[38]

Identity of the creator

Purpose of creation

Accuracy and reliability

Past and current use of records

Intensity of information

Relationship to other records

Nature and quality of the information

He then offers a series of considerations on the value of the records to researchers:[39]

Relationship to the program's researcher priorities

Usability

Access restrictions

Anticipated descriptive and promotional activities

These types of issues guide archivists in making practical decisions for the particular institutions they represent. An archivist seeks to acquire records that are rich in high-quality information, that will suit the collection policy of the institution, and that will be of interest to scholars. Given the interpretive nature of the task, Dearstyne suggests that the appraisal be well documented and represent a collective decision among colleagues.[40] As such, at archival facilities the appraisal process is standardized according to a set of criteria, benefits from the judgment of an experienced archivist, and contains an element of quality control in the form of joint decision-making.

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[38] Ibid., 116-117.
[39] Ibid., 117-118.
[40] Ibid., 118.

3. RE-CREATING THE EDITORIAL PROCESS: Appraisal in a Publishing Setting

The publishing process generates an enormous paper trail. Between correspondence, contracts, original manuscripts, edited manuscripts, copy-edited manuscripts, galley proofs, promotional materials, and all of the other types of documents that are created by a publishing house, thousands of pages of information are required to bring a project from genesis to publication. All of this information is useful to the publishing house during the production of a book, but much of it ceases to be needed once the book has gone to press. But this vast amount of documentation represents a wealth of knowledge for researchers interested in writing and publishing. Publishers' archives are of great interest to archival facilities and researchers because they provide insight not only into the trajectory of particular books but also into the life and character of authors; the creative process of writing, editorial, and design practices; the publishing industry; and so on. Many of these documents would be valuable in isolation, and when publishers' records are kept together, the interrelationships between them make the documents even more valuable as a collection. That is, when viewed in correlation, the records of a publishing house become a versatile research tool for a wide range of disciplines. For this reason, many archival facilities try to keep publishers' records intact as a whole, rather than acquiring bits and pieces. Although archives collect many other types of records, such as administrative or financial documents, the focus of this study is upon the analysis of editorial records – from manuscript to published book.

As we have seen, the necessity to limit the amount of information stored in archives has led to a process of selection, a distillation of the total record into usable archival records. Having established that selectivity is essential to the management of archival records, we will look at the process of appraising editorial records. Out of what may be thousands of pages that go into editing a published book, the archivist attempts to extract the essential elements of the editorial process by discarding extraneous documents – to create a representation of the editorial process without keeping the complete record of that process.

The complexity of the selection process is demonstrated in the numerous principles and suggestions made by Laura Millar, an archivist with a specialty in publishers' archives, in *The Story Behind the Book*, published in 2009. The text is laid out as a how-to manual for publishers and authors wanting to archive their records. Among a multitude of concerns, Millar lists a few basic principles that simplify the process for novice records managers. One of the most basic concepts, she writes, is that archivists determine the value of a record according to the reason the record was created.[41] "The most important principle of records and archives management… is that *archival records reflect the functions and activities of their creator*."[42] Therefore, rather than keeping the same categories of records for all donors, archivists must consider how important each type of record was to a particular donor. It may seem much simpler to stick to a list of types of files to keep, but the ability to exercise judgment in the analysis of files is very helpful when encountering files that contain the unexpected. In a sense, this skill provides a safety net, preventing the loss of potentially valuable information and, in the end, leads to a higher quality archival collection.

The practice of evaluating a document based upon what it reveals about its creator must be considered from a number of standpoints. At a publishing house, the creator of a document may be the author, one of several editors or designers, the publisher, the company itself, or any of these in combination. Future researchers may be interested in any stage of the publishing process – such as writing, editing, design, marketing, or distribution – making the analysis of publisher's files a challenging activity.

Another principle is that each project must be evaluated independently. For example, although each book would follow a boilerplate schedule in a standard version of the publishing process, in a living publishing house, there is no typical book. Each project follows its own trajectory – often with a varying number of edits or proofs, more than one author, images from multiple sources, translation issues – all of which make it difficult to apply the same rules of archival selection to each book that is published. These types of variables can change the path that each project takes, at times in unpredictable ways. As

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[41] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 65.
[42] Ibid., 53.

difficult as this can make the editorial process at the time, it can also be challenging trying to reproduce the process in the archival record.

The public reaction to particular projects must also be taken into consideration, although in some cases only time will tell which books have long-lasting importance, and future value cannot be predicted.[43] As a general rule, when the archivist has the luxury of knowing that a book has been particularly popular, scandalous, or groundbreaking, far more of the production materials will be kept. Furthermore, records relating to books that were published are generally seen to be of greater value than records concerning books that were rejected.[44] The reason for this is that books that have been published have entered the public realm and therefore are more likely to stimulate the interest of future researchers. A book that has not been published is unlikely to garner much interest, unless the author was or becomes well known otherwise, or under special circumstances, such as a controversy surrounding the manuscript brought the document to the attention of the public in some way. For instance, in the case of a book that went on to be a record-breaking bestseller at another publishing house, a rejected manuscript may be worth keeping.

Despite the variability of individual editorial records, certain categories of documents created in publishing houses are of greater value than others. Because archivists are interested in collecting items that will have long-term value for researchers, they look to collect items that are rich in information and that reveal something about a writer, editor, publisher, location, editorial or design process, and so on. While a degree of flexibility is necessary in the appraisal of records, the following types of editorial documents have proven to be of interest to researchers for the high quality of the information they carry and should be given special attention during appraisal: editorial policy statements, manuscripts at various stages of the editorial process, correspondence, publisher-author contracts,[45] and manuscript registers.[46] These documents are essential to understanding the inner workings of a publishing house, the author-editor relationship, the editorial process, and the rationale behind editorial changes to a manuscript. Editorial

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[43] Ibid., 62.

[44] Millar, "Story Behind the Book" (unpublished manuscript), 38.

[45] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 58.

policy statements are vital to understanding the editorial direction of a publishing house; keeping these on file at an archive provides researchers with evidence with which to interpret and assess individual manuscripts or the editorial department of the publishing house as a whole. For most researchers interested in a particular author, editor-author correspondence and manuscripts at various stages of the publishing process will be the primary source materials, although publisher-author contracts may be of great value for understanding a writer's career and relationship with the publisher. Finally, manuscript registers are invaluable for archives, for they record the publication history of the company.

On the other hand, the following types of documents tend to have less long-term research value: duplicates of an original document (unless heavily annotated),[47] receipts,[48] manuscripts of technical books or reference works.[49] Duplicates of manuscripts and correspondence are redundant; therefore, unless the copies have been annotated with substantive notes beyond mere ephemera, it is not worthwhile to keep them. Receipts and manuscripts of technical or reference works are examples of ephemera. These documents may have short-term value for the publishers, such as for tax purposes, in the case of receipts, or for queries during the publication process, in the case of a manuscript. The publisher may want to keep them for a number of years,[50] but it is unlikely that an archive would be interested in them for long-term storage. However, the principle of judging documents on an individual basis also applies here: such documents may be significant in some way under special circumstances. Therefore, after a number of years elapse and the records have outlived their usefulness in the office, they can be sorted through for donation to an archival facility.

As these examples illustrate, there are no simple rules for determining the value of publishers' files. At every stage of the process of appraisal, the experience and judgment of the archivist is essential to the selection of archival documents that will have long-term research value. Years of training and working experience guide archival professionals in

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[46] Ibid., 67.
[47] Ibid., 62.
[48] Ibid., 58.
[49] Ibid., 67.
[50] Five to seven years, according to Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 62.

making these difficult decisions, and it would be nearly impossible for donating institutions to meet these standards. Therefore, Millar suggests is that when in doubt as to the historical value of a record, it is better to err on the side of caution and keep questionable materials and leave the final decision to a trained archivist, rather than dispose of something potentially valuable.[51] However, as will be discussed in the following sections, for publishers interested in donating their records to an archival facility, there are some simple principles to apply when assessing the potential value of their documents. Donors are expected to sort through their records prior to transferring them to the archives, and some general knowledge of how to assess value can make the procedure much less daunting.

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[51] Ibid., 67.

4. CASE STUDY: The Publishing Archives of D&M Publishers at Simon Fraser University

The following is a case study prepared during a four-month internship that I completed at D&M Publishers in the summer of 2008, as a Master of Publishing student. As part of my duties, I was responsible for sorting through the editorial files of books that had been published in previous seasons. All of the books had been sent to press, so the files were no longer actively in use and there was no need to keep the full editorial record. The files were condensed according to a set of criteria provided by SFU, separated into labelled folders, and will be housed in the on-site archives for three years. After that, the files will be sent as is to the archives at Simon Fraser University Library, where the complete publishing records of D&M reside.

4.1 *D&M Publishers*

D&M Publishers is Canada's largest independent book publisher, based in Vancouver, British Columbia. The company comprises three imprints: Douglas & McIntyre and Greystone Books in Vancouver, and New Society Publishers on Gabriola Island, British Columbia, acquired in 2008. Founded in 1971 by Jim Douglas and Scott McIntyre, the firm has since established itself as a preeminent player in Canadian and international book markets.[52] The Vancouver office, the focus of this report, publishes Spring and Fall lists for both in-house imprints, totalling around sixty-five books per year. D&M has two in-house archives, one containing two copies of each book that they have published and one containing the last three years' worth of editorial files, kept on hand for reference. Author contracts are also kept on site, again for reference. Editorial files older than three years are sent to the archives at Simon Fraser University Library in Burnaby, British Columbia.

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[52] D&M Publishers Inc., "About Us: D&M Publishers," D&M Publishers Inc., http://www.dmpibooks.com/about.

4.2 *The SFU Library Archives*

Simon Fraser University houses a collection of publishing archives from British Columbia, including D&M, Sono Nis Press, Talonbooks, Nightwood Editions, Caitlin Press, and Polestar Press.[53] The library also actively seeks out agreements with other B.C. publishers in the hope of expanding its collection.[54] The collection, titled Book Publishing, Book Arts, History of the Book, is made up of books and records originating elsewhere in Canada and in the U.K., but only the archives of publishers from British Columbia are actively collected. Although the library accepts donations of collections from other areas, the primary focus of the collection is a provincial publishing history. The largest component of the SFU publishing archives is the records of D&M.[55] According to Eric Swanick, Special Collections head librarian, the SFU publishing archives collection began with the acquisition of D&M's records in 1998 and grew from there to encompass other B.C. publishers.

4.3 *The Archiving Agreement*

The original donation of the company's records to SFU took place in 1998, although the formal agreement between the two parties is dated 2001.[56] The D&M archive is made up of editorial records, marketing files, catalogues, and copies of published books. Unlike some donors, D&M does not store confidential files at SFU, therefore none of the records are subject to access restrictions; all are available to researchers by appointment. Employees at D&M occasionally access the archives at SFU – for example, to answer questions regarding earlier editions of books or author correspondence.

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[53] Simon Fraser University Library, "Special Collections and Rare Books at SFU Library – Collections: An Introduction," Simon Fraser University, http://www.lib.sfu.ca/special-collections/introduction.
[54] Eric Swanick (Head Librarian, Special Collections, Simon Fraser University) in discussion with the author, September 2008.
[55] Simon Fraser University Library, "Special Collections and Rare Books Collections Policy at SFU Library: Archival Collections Concerning Book Publishing in Canada," Simon Fraser University, http://www.lib.sfu.ca/special-collections/policy#archival.

The archiving agreement with Simon Fraser was initiated by D&M. SFU was the natural choice, as co-founder Jim Douglas and board member Don Atkins already had long-term relationships with the university and its publishing programs.[57] The D&M acquisition was of particular interest to the SFU Library, which already housed Douglas's papers from his tenure as president of the Association of Canadian Publishers.[58] According to Douglas, the agreement with SFU was of great benefit to D&M. Not only did the publisher receive a tax credit for the donation, but in moving the archives to the library, D&M no longer had to worry about storing the records on site. The archives at SFU provided a safe and organized storage area for the publisher, which could be easily accessed through the library. As to the benefits of the agreement, D&M vice president Karen Gilmore says, "The main reason is space! But there is also great comfort in knowing that the archives are being properly maintained in a central location."[59]

In Canada, donation of publishing records to an archive holds several advantages for the publisher, including a tax credit for the value of the donation, as mentioned above. In order to be eligible for a tax credit, a standard procedure must be followed to protect the interests of both the donor and the recipient institution: the donor must agree to donate before an appraisal will be done; only materials that are accepted are counted in the appraised value (not the portion of the donation the institution will not be accepting); up to two independent appraisals may be necessary, depending upon the estimated value of the donation; the donor may be responsible for paying for the appraisal; and finally, it may take months or years for the appraisal to take place and a receipt to be issued.[60] Before the tax receipt is issued, legal ownership of the materials being donated must be transferred to the recipient institution; furthermore, if anything is provided to the donor

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[56] Karen Gilmore (Vice President, Operations, Corporate & Legal Affairs, D&M Publishers Inc.), email message to author, December 11, 2008.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Rowland Lorimer (Director, Master of Publishing Program, Simon Fraser University), in discussion with the author, October 2008.
[59] Gilmore, email.
[60] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 114.

in return (such as cash, although this rarely occurs in archival donations), this will generally reduce the eligible amount of the donation.[61]

The amount of tax credit a publisher can expect to receive varies. At the federal level, it amounts to 29% of the estimated value of the donation if appraised at over $200. Although the credit is normally only applicable to a maximum of 75% of the company's net income, this amount increases to 100% of net income when the publisher donates certified cultural properties.[62] These include, for instance, items such as editorial files, but not finished books. Publishers should be aware that despite the higher potential for savings, certification adds a level of complexity to the donation process, during which the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board (CCPERB) must determine that the materials are "of outstanding significance and national importance."[63] Tax credits for certified cultural properties are issued based upon the fair market value of the donation, as per the *Cultural Property Export and Import Act*.[64] In the case of ongoing donations like the arrangement between D&M and SFU, the tax credits are issued with each donation.

Not only do these practical benefits accrue to a donating company, but donating cultural properties to a public institution also enhances the goodwill value of a business. Regarding the long-term value of the D&M collection, Gilmore says, "Given the stature of D&M as the leading independent trade book publisher in Canada and certainly in B.C., the archives might be of value to those interested in the industry, and in seeing how a publishing list develops and evolves over years."[65] Furthermore, as co-founder Scott McIntyre comments, the collection stands out in that very few other Canadian publishers have all of their key records, dating back to their inception, available in one public archive.[66]

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[61] Canada Revenue Agency, "Which Donations Can Help Reduce My Taxes?" http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/chrts/dnrs/svngs/1-eng.html.

[62] Canada Revenue Agency, "How Is My Tax Credit Calculated?" http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/chrts/dnrs/svngs/2-eng.html.

[63] Canada Revenue Agency, "Gifts and Income Tax: Gifts of Certified Cultural Property," p. 113(E) rev. 08, http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/p113/p113-e.html#P127_11791.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Gilmore, email.

[66] Scott McIntyre (Publisher, Douglas & McIntyre), email message to author, January 2009.

4.4 *Collection Criteria*

Sometime after the initial acquisition, Ralph Stanton, former SFU Special Collections librarian, and Rowland Lorimer, director of the Master of Publishing Program at SFU, went through the files to develop criteria for the acquisition of publishing records. At issue was the limited amount of storage space available at the library. A list of criteria was developed to be given to donating publishers, based upon the anticipated research needs of future scholars. According to Lorimer, three themes serve as the basis for the library's collection: policy interest, author development, and author-publisher interaction.[67] For example, there is a concentration within the collection on author-editor correspondence, deemed to be of great scholarly value. Along with editorial files, seasonal catalogues are collected, a practice advocated by Jim Douglas, who feels that it is an important accompaniment to the collection because it shows industry trends.[68] The library also tries to collect the financial details of donating publishing houses for researchers interested in economics and business history. On the other hand, the library does not collect comprehensive documentation on the design process; for example, a number of publishers offered the library layout acetates, which were determined to not be suitable for the collection.

The following is a list of the types of records the SFU Library is interested in acquiring from donating publishing houses:

Executive correspondence
Editorial materials
Promotional materials
Production materials
Manuscripts
Correspondence between authors, editors, and publishers
Rights and permissions
Copyright materials

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[67] Lorimer, discussion.
[68] Jim Douglas (Co-founder, D&M Publishers Inc.), in discussion with author, August 2008.

Matters financial

Catalogues

One copy of each book (or one copy in paper and one in cloth if available)[69]

This list is given to all donors as a guide for preparing their files for donation, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the donor to ensure the quality of the materials to be archived.

Although the list above reflects the total area of interest of the SFU archives, at D&M the donations are handled departmentally. As such, even though the library collects financial, legal, and marketing materials, my responsibility at D&M was to sort through correspondence, editorial, and design files. These files were collected from the production boxes that are kept on hand for ease of reference during the production process – from acquisition to publication. Once a project is completed, the files are taken out of the production boxes and placed together in storage until they can be sorted through. Based upon SFU's collection criteria, D&M employees periodically cull the editorial and production records in preparation for long-term storage at the SFU archives. The editorial department's mandate for the preparation of archival files is to provide a complete (yet condensed) picture of the editorial process, while discarding any redundant or extraneous materials.

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[69] Swanick, discussion.

5. CREATING A USABLE PAST: Selectivity in Practice

5.1 *The Publishing Program at D&M*

Known for the high production value and innovative design of their books, D&M also engages in a labour-intensive process of acquisition, editing, production, and design for each book they publish. The editorial records reflect this practice, and with records on a backlist of more than seven hundred titles,[70] the D&M archives reflect a rich company history.

Both Douglas & McIntyre and Greystone Books have diverse publishing programs. There are thematic ties, such as the history, nature, and culture of British Columbia, but the two imprints offer a wide variety of other content each season. The Spring and Fall lists of 2008 provide an excellent example of this diversity.[71] A total of seventy books were produced, fifty-eight of which were new titles (the rest were paperback reprints, which will not be analyzed here, as most of the editorial work was done for previous editions). Of the new titles, twenty were illustrated, art, or photography books (with at least 100 images each), although a number of the non-fiction titles also contained photo sections. There were thirty-five non-fiction titles, three cookbooks, fifteen titles with more than one author, two translations, four guidebooks, and one work of fiction.

Because of this diversity, the editorial process at D&M varies from title to title. Art and photography books are often published in collaboration with museums or galleries, and the images are the central focus of the design and text; the cookbooks require a specialized editing skill set, including measurement conversions and recipe testing, which can require daily interactions with the author; translations and multiple-author books require a complex process of negotiation far beyond the standard editor-author exchange; non-fiction titles may require extensive fact-checking, potentially extensive endnotes,

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[70] D&M Publishers Inc., "About Us," http://www.dmpibooks.com/about.

[71] Douglas & McIntyre, *Douglas & McIntyre: Spring Books 2008* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Publishing, 2008), publisher's catalogue; Douglas & McIntyre, *Douglas & McIntyre: Fall Books 2008* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Publishing, 2008), publisher's catalogue; Greystone Books, *Greystone Books: Spring 2008* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Publishing, 2008), publisher's catalogue; Greystone Books, *Greystone Books: Fall 2008* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Publishing, 2008), publisher's catalogue.

bibliographies, and indexes, and may contain photographs that must be sourced and captioned. In short, in contrast with a list containing mainly fiction titles, which are more likely to follow a more standard editorial timeline, D&M's lists (which included only one fiction title in 2008) require a wide range of editorial skills and a long list of specialist contacts.

5.2 *The Selection Process at D&M*

Complete records of the production and editorial process are kept for each book published by D&M. Until the book is printed, these materials are kept for reference in case queries come up as the production of the book moves forward. After the books have been published, the production and editorial files, which include everything from the original proposal and manuscript to cover copy and promotional materials, are sorted through for donation to the archive. As the library has few resources to devote to reorganizing files upon arrival, the librarians depend upon D&M employees to create a record that demonstrates a faithful representation of the original editorial process. The goal of the employee assigned this task (one of the editors, editorial assistants, or interns, such as myself) is to prepare a full representation of the editorial process and to discard any extraneous material. In accordance with the list of desirable materials produced by the library, production materials are either placed in appropriately labelled file folders (by book title) or discarded.

At D&M, the editorial files are separated into editorial stages: correspondence; style sheets; proposals and outlines; original unedited manuscripts; substantively and stylistically edited manuscripts; copy-edited manuscripts; laser proofs (with substantial changes); and additional information, such as expert reviewer comments, notes on libel reads, and permission forms.[72] In other words, the editorial process is re-created according to the production schedule. Many components of the actual editorial and production process are discarded, such as drafts of jacket copy, indexes, maps, photo pages, and duplicates of manuscripts. For the most part, few changes are introduced in

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[72] Iva Cheung (Associate Editor, Greystone Books), personal communication, May 2008.

the layout stage; the images and illustrations in the published book are sufficient for future research needs.

5.3 *Exceptions to the Rule*

For many projects the process is fairly straightforward. Novels, in particular, tend to follow the standard timeline of editorial stages. An original manuscript is received from the author, then moves through substantive and stylistic editing, copy editing, design, and laser proofs; and author and editor changes and correspondence occur at each stage. However, each project has its idiosyncrasies, and for a publishing house with a publishing program as diverse as D&M's, few books adhere to the standard editorial timeline. For instance, if D&M buys rights to publish the Canadian edition of a foreign title or brings out a new edition of a previously published book, the original manuscript may consist of typeset pages. D&M also publishes many books filled with illustrations or photographs from multiple sources, at times with little accompanying text. A large portion of the D&M list comprises cookbooks, guidebooks, art books, and coffee table books. For all of these books, the editorial process may not follow the standard editorial timeline upon which the archival selection criteria are based.

While processing the editorial files for donation to the archive, I ran into several central problems, including the challenge of distinguishing relevant from irrelevant changes on the laser proofs. Earlier stages of editorial work, such as the original manuscript and the substantive edit, are more dense in the information they carry and are therefore more valuable to the researcher. It is at these stages that the manuscript undergoes the most radical changes and will therefore contain the most information about the editorial evolution of the book. In fact, the density of value of editorial records declines along the timeline of the process; therefore, more complete archival records are kept at earlier stages of production, tapering off toward the final changes at the late proofing stage. These changes are usually minimal, and therefore reveal less of the editorial process, but in some cases the proofs play an important role.

The sheer volume of laser proofs, which can add up to five or more complete photocopies of the composed pages, demands a critical eye in sorting them. Much of the material is redundant, such as unmarked pages and corrections that have been made by both proofreader and author. That is why only pages "with substantive changes" are kept.[73] A page upon which the only correction is "wf" – wrong font – would not be worth saving for the archive. At the laser-proof stage, when the manuscript has been designed and typeset, ideally the only remaining errors are bad line breaks, typographical anomalies, and others introduced during the layout process. However, this is also the safety-net stage, when all of the little errors, and the occasional large one, that have slipped through are (hopefully) caught. From typos to factual errors, laser proofs often contain many editorial changes, in particular during the first and second rounds.

Because the first lasers are reviewed by author, editor, and proofreader, this stage produces an abundance of redundant material. The standard at D&M is to keep the proofreader's copy only, as the proofreader collates his or her corrections with those of the author and editor, and forwards one master copy to design. Generally the author and editor's comments will be recorded in a different colour or will have an *author* or *editor* label on the note to distinguish them from the proofreader's corrections. Theoretically, the proofreader's copy will contain the information from all three of the copies, but only if the proofreader has transferred the comments verbatim. At times, this is not the case – a degree of translation is necessary. For instance, when the author's note on the proof is judged to be potentially insulting to the designer, the proofreader may choose to soften the language while keeping the meaning. In this situation, the wording on the two copies may be radically different, but it is standard procedure at D&M to keep only the proofreader's master copy for posterity.

The proofs of one book that I examined contained a number of examples of this. The manuscript contained numerous charts and graphs, none of which met with the author's satisfaction. The author liberally shared his disdain for the designer's work in his annotations to the first proofs – the pages were littered with expressions of his displeasure, and were reiterated in an accompanying email. The proofreader, who collated the

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[73] Cheung, personal communication.

comments from the author (including those from the email), editor, and proofreader copies into a master proof for the designer, toned down the author's language. Exclamations such as "Once again, this chart is hard to read without the columns and lines. Fix!", "Wrong!", "What is this?", and simply "!" were transformed into neutral commentary such as "Need better definition between cells," "Would it be possible to make a separate legend in the top right-hand corner?" or simply corrected with standard proofreader's marks. Such situations present a strong case for keeping both sets of proofs, because they provide insight not only into the life of the author, but also into the little-known politics of design, proofreading, and author-publisher relations.

In the editorial files of another book that I reviewed, the author's proofs contained sketches made by the author as suggestions for chapter opening illustrations – none of which were transferred to the proofreader's copy. As Laura Millar explains, the value of proofs as historical evidence is based on whether they reveal aspects of the writing or editing processes, or provide insight "into the author's ideas, attitudes, and writing style."[74] Keeping this principle in mind, I had to decide whether or not to keep more information for these books than was required by the standard procedure at D&M. Given the additional information contained in the author's proofs, I sometimes chose to retain those pages as well.

Another step in the archival selection process at which information can be lost is the discarding of sticky notes attached to manuscript pages. According to archival standards, attachments such as paper clips, staples, elastic bands, and sticky notes should be removed prior to transfer to the library. Although this is done in the interest of preservation, it can cause the loss of valuable information. Some authors and editors write extensively on sticky notes and other attachments, particularly at the substantive, stylistic and copy-editing stages. Much of the information written on these notes is ephemeral, but at times they are used because there is not enough space on the page to write important notes. In one instance, a substantively edited manuscript had multiple notes attached to virtually every page, connected to the passages they referred to by lines and arrows that ran from the sticky note to the manuscript. The edits made little sense without the

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[74] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 76.

attached notes. Faced with the potential loss of information, my original impulse was to transcribe the commentary on the sticky notes and include it with the manuscript. However, after some discussion with a superior it was decided that due to time constraints and to the nature of the book at hand, this was an unnecessary step to take.

As even these few examples illustrate, there is great value in exercising judgment in appraising the editorial record. In a situation like the one at D&M, in which editorial files are being sorted through by company employees and not by trained archivists, the sorter may lack the experience to make good judgment calls in all instances. However, the editorial experience of the employee will inform how the importance of each record is interpreted. In fact, as a first-hand witness, an employee's recollection of a project may even enhance his or her ability to judge which documents are vital to understanding the editorial process.

5.4 *Suggestions*

Through the experience of applying archival principles to the sorting of D&M editorial and production files, I offer the following suggestions to those tasked with preparing files for donation to the archive. While these suggestions are based upon specific examples from D&M's files, they can be generalized to those of other publishers.

Firstly, for a publisher with as broad a publishing program as D&M, strict adherence to a set list of labels to apply to the components of each book (original manuscript, substantively edited manuscript, etc.) may not be the best system. D&M produces cookbooks, art books, guidebooks, fiction, non-fiction, books with multiple authors, translations, and co-publications and reprints from other publishers. Not all of these diverse projects follow the same editorial path as a single-authored novel in its first edition. Perhaps the official selection criteria could be used as general guideline, with the addition of more descriptive labels for projects that do not fit the standard. I often took this approach when sorting through files that contained interesting information in file categories that were generally recycled.

Secondly, in my experience, a good deal of interpretation and analysis was necessary in determining the historical worth of materials that would not be included in the archive files if I followed the standard procedure. Luckily, most of these materials that I encountered were also those with the least likely long-term historical value. The information considered to have the highest density of information (editorial policy statements, manuscripts, correspondence, publisher-author contracts) was kept in its entirety, in standard practice, and therefore generated few conundrums. One exception to this, as discussed above, was the removal of sticky notes, which occasionally conveyed a great deal of editorial information. As a general rule (and again, this is open to interpretation for different projects), the earlier the stage of the editorial process, the higher the density of information the document will contain – for instance, original and substantively or stylistically edited manuscripts. It is at the early stages that the most dramatic changes in a manuscript take place; the further along in the publishing process the document is, the more trivial the changes become (such as minor grammatical and typographical errors) – thus their reduced research potential. Most researchers are far more interested in the creative process of writing and the substantive and stylistic editorial evolution of a manuscript than they are in tracking the spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors that are caught in the later stages. An exception to this would be a researcher interested in book design, for which the laser proofs would make visible an important step in the layout process.

Another exception was encountered in sorting through laser proofs. As mentioned above, in order to condense the amount of material sent to the archives, only a collated proofreader's copy of laser proofs is kept, rather than separate editor's, author's, and proofreader's copies. In theory this method preserves the information from all three of the copies, but during the process of collation, the proofreader often translates the editor's and author's comments to make them clearer or more palatable to the designers for whom the comments are intended. In the master proof, it can be difficult to ascertain which party has made which comment, as they all appear on the same page in the same handwriting. One recommendation would be to keep at least the author's original comments, if not the editor's as well, if major changes were introduced at the laser stage.

As few substantive changes are made at this stage of production, including the additional pages will not unreasonably increase the size of the file. This would particularly be worth considering in the case of a book that has generated a great deal of publicity or sales.

Thirdly, as Laura Millar suggests, consideration should be given to what elements of the record could be of interest in the future, including design elements. With the award-winning design of D&M books and the number of titles they produce with a large portion of visual content, their proofs could of value to future researchers interested in the design process. Some titles go through a number of cover changes before the final one is printed. The creative process behind these decisions could be of great interest to those researching book design. Also, the editorial record (at the laser stage) often reflects solutions to design problems and negotiations between the priorities of editorial and design. The policy at D&M is to discard proofs of photo pages and illustrations, which in most cases do not change between the first lasers and the printed book. Here again, the employee's judgment may be the best way to predict which documents are of ongoing historical value.

Finally, given that certain types of manuscripts are considered more valuable than others, the sorter should consider the subject matter of the project at hand as a factor in determining its historical worth. As discussed above, literary manuscripts are generally of greater interest to researchers than technical or reference works. According to Millar, the original manuscript and final edited manuscript would be enough to demonstrate the editorial evolution of a technical or reference book.[75] Many of the non-fiction titles that D&M produces would fall into the category of literary non-fiction, and therefore could be considered closer to fiction in the archival process. In these titles, as opposed to guidebooks or how-to manuals, the writing process and editorial evolution of the manuscript can be as complex as that of fiction. At the moment, D&M keeps the same types of documentation for all titles, regardless of the genre of book. It would be worth considering to keep less documentation on the technical titles, such as guidebooks. This is one avenue to saving storage space at D&M and at SFU, which both institutions wish to do.

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[75] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 67.

Under ideal circumstances, each document would be given careful examination. However, most employees tasked with the process of selection are short on time, and it is not always possible or desirable to scrutinize every sheet of paper. As such, the recommendations listed above may not be possible for every institution. A balance must be reached between the resources at hand (the time the employee can devote to the task and the amount of space available for storage) and the desired outcome of the process. When there is not much time to devote to examining each record in detail, the overall size of the file in question provides a basic indicator of which files would be worth a closer look. Termed "fat file analysis,"[76] this practice could be applied to D&M's editorial files if time was tight, for the records of some projects consisted of merely a handful of emails and a few copies of the manuscript, while others took up multiple boxes. The more complex the editorial process, the longer the paper trail – the number of authors or contributors, the state of the manuscript when it came in, the number of illustrations and photographs all contribute to the complexity of the editorial process. Projects that demonstrate such complexity should be evaluated more closely, as they tend to reveal multiple aspects of the publishing process (such as legal issues, correspondence with a stubborn author, or difficulty obtaining permissions).

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[76] Millar, "Story Behind the Book" (unpublished manuscript), 38.

6. ISSUES WITH DIGITIZATION

Every storage repository with the responsibility to ensure access over time to authentic electronic records will eventually face technology obsolescence.

-Charles M. Dollar, *Authentic Electronic Records: Strategies for Long-Term Access*[77]

A central concern in modern archival practice is the growing prevalence of digital files and the need to stay up to date on the best methods for preserving them. Not only are archivists lured by the space-saving qualities of digitized archival materials, many of the materials being donated have been created digitally and exist only in that form. For instance, most workplaces have moved away from paper trails to primarily electronic record-keeping systems. In private life, the instantaneous nature of email and telephone calls has forever changed the face (and the archive) of personal communications. Likewise, in the world of publishing, often the original form of a manuscript or correspondence is digital, as a word-processing document, PDF, email, or instant messaging; marketing materials are pieced together from online databases; and the page composition of books is done with design software. With the move toward generating documents electronically, questions arise not only as to how to preserve these documents, but also as to the value of the multiple copies that they are bound to generate, as well as the larger theoretical question of what constitutes an original digital file. Archives are filled with tangibles, such as paper, photographs, and other objects. They may keep digital copies of originals for ease of access, but the focus of most archives is the collection of material objects. Many documents have been created on computers, but with rapidly changing technologies, files stored in a digital format are in danger of becoming inaccessible due to platform obsolescence. Current storage practices are largely focused upon physical documents, leaving digital files in an archival no-man's land. The implementation of an electronic record-keeping system requires a great deal of research, time, and money – resources that many archives have in short supply. Large-scale

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[77] Charles M. Dollar, *Authentic Electronic Records: Strategies for Long-Term Access* (Chicago: Cohasset Associates, Inc., 2002), 45.

projects are underway at many archival institutions to digitize their contents, but at the donation level, publishers may be expected to provide tangible versions of their records (as is the case at the SFU archive).

Most archives encounter a number of obstacles in the preservation of electronic records: digital technologies constantly evolve, which threatens the longevity of any electronic record; international and non-proprietary standards for digital information are in a constant state of flux, making it difficult to keep up to date; archival facilities often lack the technology to store electronic records and provide users with access; and some archivists lack the technical knowledge to maintain electronic records until they have extensive training.[78] Furthermore, digital media are not as stable as physical media; even with proper care, electronic records are at the risk of corruption or data loss.[79] However, given the short lifespan of most electronic recording and storage technologies, obsolescence poses a far greater threat to the viability of an electronic record.[80] One solution is frequent migration of digital information to new generations of software or hardware, but that is a costly and time-consuming practice.[81] When faced with this many hurdles, an archivist may begin to see a paper-based system as idyllic.

6.1 *Paper or Pixels?*

The implementation of an electronic records preservation program is a major decision – one that above all requires a commitment to taking the time to find the right system. Therefore, if electronic records are not the primary focus of the institution, it may not be in their best interest to concentrate its resources in that area. Another consideration is the ongoing cost of maintaining an electronic records access system – a great deal more time, effort, and money must be devoted to the collection to keep it

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[78] Dearstyne, "Riding the Lightning: Strategies for Electronic Records and Archives Programs," in *Effective Approaches for Managing Electronic Records and Archives*, ed. Bruce W. Dearstyne *(*Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 141.

[79] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 163.

[80] Task Force on Archiving of Digital Information, "Preserving Digital Information: Report of the Task Force on Archiving of Digital Information," Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources, 1996, 12, www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub63watersgarrett.pdf.

[81] Ibid., 13.

accessible than would be necessary for a paper version of the same collection. When considering an electronic records access program, an institution must first take into account its level of financial support. The costs of establishing and maintaining such a program can be prohibitive – tens of thousands per year for smaller institutions and up to millions per year for larger institutions.[82] In fact, it can be more costly in the long run to invest in a pared-down program than not to invest in one at all. "In short, it would be more cost-effective to convert textual electronic files and flat-file databases to paper than to invest resources in… a scaled-back program."[83] While transferring electronic records to paper or microfilm may seem wasteful, the enormous costs associated with establishing and maintaining a system to ensure long-term access to electronic records can push such systems out of the reach of many institutions.[84] The reality of electronic records management is that the lifespan of recording and storage technologies is only two to five years long, requiring frequent (and costly) migration.[85]

At the production level, Laura Millar advises companies to develop a policy on whether to use the paper document or the electronic document as the official means of record-keeping; if paper documents are the preferred method, then relevant electronic documents have to be printed out and filed.[86] Although she advises against operating an entire company on the printout method, this is primarily because complex electronic records, such as databases and content management systems, cannot be printed out easily.[87] However, in the production of books, most electronic documents are produced with the intention of printing them out – by word-processing and page-layout software. Therefore, the printout system seems to be a natural choice. Furthermore, many of the production records are paper originals, such as hand-written copy editing and mailed correspondence. On the other hand, if a company chooses electronic documents as the official record-keeping system, then filing hand-written documents would require digitizing the originals by scanning them with handwriting recognition software. In an

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[82] Dollar, *Authentic Electronic Records*, 109-110.
[83] Ibid., 111.
[84] Ibid., 46.
[85] Task Force on Archiving of Digital Information, "Preserving Digital Information," 12.
[86] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 165.
[87] Ibid., 167.

environment in which production schedules must be met and time is often at a premium, adding this extra step might prove more time-consuming than is necessary and might require an investment in new technology to perform this task easily. The move to an electronic records access system in the production department would be an unnecessary complication given the nature of the documents at hand.

6.2 *Digital Archiving at D&M*

Currently, all digital production and editorial files at D&M are printed out and then added to the production files for each book. This includes email correspondence (printed out upon reception), manuscripts created in word-processing programs, manuscripts that have been edited onscreen with tracked changes, typeset pages, and image files. Although this work is not done in preparation for donating the files to SFU, it certainly makes the process of creating archival files much simpler. For ease of reference, all materials related to the production of a book are kept in one production box. Having all of these materials at hand in one area facilitates the production process immensely. Rather than having to track down a forwarded email in a co-worker's inbox, an employee can simply walk over to the production box to access records from any stage of the production process. Therefore, although this system may be cumbersome to employees if it is used solely for archival purposes, this method of record donation remains the most practical for both parties, because the printouts are created for the production process. In other words, as both the archive and the publisher rely on paper-based systems of storage, donating paper copies of digital files is the most practical means of saving electronic records. This situation may change in the next few years, but in 2008, converting to a primarily electronic record keeping system did not seem to be a pressing concern at D&M.

From the perspective of the librarians at SFU, a paper-based system does have its problems, but it may be the best solution to the challenge of storing publishers' archives. Not only does this method of storage create practically permanent tangible records for storage at the archives, it also enables the archives to store all of the editorial files in the

same area for ease of access. If some files were kept in digital format and others grouped on a shelf, access to the archival record would be further complicated by a negotiation of technology. However, the process of printing out every document related to the production process leads to an extensive set of copies that have been used for one purpose or another around the department. For instance, when I was sorting through materials to be archived, the vast majority of documents that were discarded were multiple copies of digital files and email printouts. It was easy to decide which copies to discard when many were exact copies of one another. However, the decision becomes more complex for printouts that have been written upon. There may never be an original digital copy, but putting the pen to a printout makes that copy an original in some sense. Once again, the assessor determines value in these situations based upon his or her experience and judgment. Without delving too deeply into the philosophical question of what constitutes originality, suffice it to say that at a practical level someone must decide whether such documents have intrinsic and ongoing historical value.

6.3 *Looking to the Future*

It may not be the most technologically advanced system, but the process of printing out digital records is the simplest and most practical for the institutions in question. Archival facilities like the Special Collections department at SFU Library that do not have sophisticated digital record access programs are simply not equipped to handle donations in a range of formats. With few resources to devote to managing the collection as it is, the SFU Library has no plans to digitize its publishing holdings.[88] At the moment, the publishing archives are a low-maintenance collection. The real value of the collection, which is only a decade old, is in the fact that the donations are constantly accumulating, and over the years the value of the collection will increase significantly. One could say that the publishing archives at SFU are still in an incubation stage, and the holdings are being carefully nurtured to grow into a collection that is representative of the publishing industry in British Columbia. As such, the time has not yet arrived for the

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[88] Swanick, discussion.

implementation of a digital system for donations. These labour-intensive digital-storage systems may be appropriate or necessary at other institutions, but a traditional paper-based system seems to be the most practical answer for the SFU Library.

There is something appealing about digital archives. Not only would the entire contents of an archive be literally at one's fingertips, but also auto-searching through these contents would be much simpler than paging through hundreds of handwritten documents. "Search engines can be designed to find the proverbial needle in the haystack, or even to create a haystack where there are only needles, that is, build patterns where there seemed to be only fragments."[89] Even though the magic of handling original documents would be gone, the ease of using electronic records might make up for the loss. These are great advantages, which cause many libraries and archives to feel pressure to convert their holdings to electronic formats. However, this advance in functionality comes at a great cost to the archivist, both in a monetary sense and in terms of the time and effort necessary to produce and annotate digitized documents. It may be that in upcoming years SFU archives will make a move toward digital record-keeping, but at the moment, the resources needed to convert vastly outweigh the benefits.

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[89] Joke Brouwer and Arjen Mulder, "Introduction," *Information Is Alive: Art and Theory on Archiving and Retrieving Data* (Rotterdam, V2_Publishing/NAI Publishers, 2003), 5.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Fascination with the past seems to be part of the collective unconscious: mythology, cultural histories, family photographs, genealogy, archaeology… Each of these pursuits is a form of recollecting the past, albeit through different means. The compulsion to know the past takes many forms across cultures, and the common thread tying it all together is the notion that to know the past is to know oneself – it is the key to understanding the present and how the world came to be. From cultures in which a people's knowledge is passed down orally, to those in which the written word takes precedence, cultural histories are among the most important of stories. They are told to inform and to entertain, to explain the present as much as to explain the past. There is significance to history beyond mere information, beyond an objective record of events gone by. It is something that inspires our imaginations and takes us back to times and people we did not know firsthand. A far cry from classroom memorizations of endless names and dates, history is the re-creation of figures and moments long dead, told in a way that is relevant to the present. Even the driest of accounts requires a leap of faith and a grain of salt to become meaningful.

This infatuation with the past has led to the multitude of archives that now exist worldwide. Whatever one's research interests, there is bound to be at least one facility catering to the subject. This abundance of historical information is invaluable to researchers and will doubtless push the boundaries of human knowledge further with each coming year. Archivists, as the caretakers of this immense intellectual wealth, have been charged with the challenging task not only of ensuring that these materials are safe from harm but also of determining what materials are worth saving. The quality of information contained in these collections is due, in large part, to the archivists that acquired and organized them. Through careful analysis and years of experience, the archivist plays the fundamental role of shaping future research potential.

Despite the essential role of archival resources in the process of historical research, archives themselves face numerous challenges in their mission to preserve our material past. Confronted by the lack of time, staff, funding, and/or interest, archivists are forced

to use restraint in their selection of historical records – although this can be a blessing in disguise, in that it will keep a collection focused in a particular area of interest. This process of determining the worth of records is one of the most difficult parts of an archivist's work. It is also one of the most historically significant roles that archivists play, for they are the determining factor, outside of chance, in which records remain to be researched. In a sense, the process of selection is a self-fulfilling prophecy: in trying to determine what will have long-lasting historical significance, archivists are choosing which records will be saved, and hence, the only records that are historically significant, in that they are the only records that remain. Archival selection is therefore a rigorous and informed communal decision. In fact, the seriousness with which archivists necessarily approach their work is based upon this notion: through the process of selection, archivists determine the historical record – decisions are often irreversible, in that rejected materials may be destroyed.

With the abundance of records that accumulate throughout the publishing process, publishing houses can provide a wealth of information for researchers interested in authors, literature, and the book-publishing industry. There are a number of benefits to donating publishing records to an archival facility. However, challenges do arise in preparing editorial and production files for donation without the experience of a trained archivist as a guide. Given the tight budgets and time constraints faced by most archival facilities, donations must be culled at the publishing house prior to donation, even if the donation will be further sorted on arrival at the archive. With limited knowledge of archival practices, the publisher's employees may find the process of selection daunting. However, some general archival principles will guide the inexperienced sorter in the assigned task.

As Laura Millar and other archivists have suggested, an element of judgment should go into determining which records have ongoing historical value. For this reason, archival selection is not as simple as keeping certain categories of records and not others – one must consider the reason the record was created.[90] However, as is often the case, in a situation in which the person creating the records is not a trained archivist, and when the

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[90] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 65.

process is a side duty slotted in amongst a slew of more pressing tasks, careful consideration of each piece of paper simply may not be possible. In this case, a simple distinction such as the "fat file analysis" would suffice –the more documentation there is on a project, the more likely it is that the project was important in some way.[91]

Another consideration when time is tight the amount of attention that a project or author has received since the records were created.[92] For instance, even a rejected manuscript may be of great historical value if the author has since gone on to win the Giller Prize for a different work. This is one reason that Millar advises publishers to keep their records for five to seven years before sorting through for donation to an archive or disposal – the historical value is much clearer after some time has elapsed.[93] Chances are that the person making the selections will be familiar enough with the projects to be able to judge which records deserve special attention.

In my experience at D&M, I was able to witness the difficulty of archival selection firsthand. Indeed, it was the troubling nature of some of the materials that led me to an interest in researching archival theory. The variety in the contents of the production files illustrated the quandaries archivists encounter on a daily basis when evaluating the historical worth of a donor's records. The uniqueness of each project that I examined made the task of sorting through the editorial files fascinating, as it demonstrated the complexity inherent in the publishing process. While some files were straightforward and followed an ideal editorial schedule, many others took meandering paths, forcing me to exercise judgment in choosing or discarding materials that did not fall neatly into a prescribed category.

As outlined above, a number of suggestions came out of my time as an amateur archivist at D&M. Although the following are based on D&M's editorial files, they can be generalized to other publishing houses.

1) Although a list of desirable editorial file types was useful as a guideline, I recommend that the sorter add additional file categories for projects that deviate from the norm. A standardized list of categories did not seem to be the most effective system for a

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[91] Millar, "Story Behind the Book" (unpublished manuscript), 38.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Millar, *Story Behind the Book*, 62.

publisher with as diverse a publishing program as D&M. The company publishes new and reprinted books in a variety of genres and for a variety of markets, and their editorial records demonstrate a high degree of variability in content.

(2) The sorter should be aware that the removal of attachments, such as sticky notes, may lead to a loss of information. These must be removed for preservation purposes, but time allowing, it is worth examining the information on the attachments in order to determine whether it should be preserved in some way.

(3) Although in current practice at D&M only the proofreader's master copy of laser proofs is archived, I recommend that the sorter examine the author's and editor's copies to ensure that potentially valuable information is not lost. In theory the proofreader's copy will incorporate all of the information from all three copies of the proof, but I encountered several instances where this was not the case.

(4) I suggest that less documentation be kept for a portion of D&M's list. At the moment, D&M keeps the same types of documentation for each book that it has published. However, a portion of the company's list consists of books that archivists would generally not keep a great deal of documentation on, such as guidebooks and technical books. For these genres, it would suffice to keep the original and final edited manuscript to demonstrate the editorial process.

(5) Given D&M's award-winning book design, it may be worthwhile to keep documentation on the design process of each book. Although this is not typically something that the SFU archive collects, researchers interested in book design may find this information of great value down the road. This suggestion would require discussion with the library to determine if an exception to library policy is worthwhile in this case.

In summary, I would recommend that the sorter use a critical eye in evaluating records. Given that the production of each book generates a unique paper trail, a degree of flexibility and judgment in decision-making will lead to higher-quality archival records. It is not worth the expense to store redundant information or documents that no one will ever be interested in using. On the other hand, potentially valuable information can be encountered in unexpected places, such as on the laser proofs of a book on the verge of going to press. The person preparing the files for donation to the archive acts as the last

line of defence against the loss of future research material. Therefore, above all, when in doubt as to the value of a record, it is better to exercise caution and keep questionable materials than to destroy them. The selector should keep in mind that this is very important work and that, time permitting, it is preferable to take a thoughtful approach to selection, rather than a rote approach.

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