

RETHINKING THE BUSINESS OF SMALL ARCHIVES

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ABSTRACT: Managing a small archival program, particularly a solo archivist shop, is no easy task. Employing Peter Drucker's writings on management, this article critically examines the assumptions archivists, especially lone arrangers, bring to their work. In cases where conventional wisdom undermines their success, solo archivists are urged to reexamine the environments in which they work, the core mission of their archival programs, and the skills required to sustain a thriving archival program. When solo archivists embrace a user-centered approach to archives management, the nimbleness of small repositories uniquely positions them to expand archival services beyond traditional boundaries.

Life after MPLP

The publication of Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner's "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing" (MPLP) unleashed a flurry of discussion among American archivists about current arrangement and description practices. Minimal processing took center stage in our professional conferences, journals, newsletters, and informal conversations, as archivists experimented in implementing the broad-brush, user-centered processing style recommended by Greene and Meissner. Early adopters of minimal processing generally agreed on its utility not only in providing access to archives users but also in helping archivists regain intellectual control of their collections and emotional control of the perennially understaffed and seemingly underappreciated modern archives.¹ The American Heritage Center's archives user survey on "More Product, Less Process" methods, launched in spring 2008, will add a critical piece to the evaluation of minimal processing's efficacy—the opinions of researchers who must navigate archival and manuscript collections.²

As an early adopter of minimal processing, I have shared my experience making the transition from full processing to minimal processing.³ While the habits of prior practice were initially difficult to break, arrangement and description at McIntyre Library's Special Collections and Archives Department at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire are no less professional than they have ever been in the past. Within about two years of implementing MPLP in this lone arranger shop, the estimated 350-linear-foot backlog shrank to a manageable 30 linear feet. But every careful reader of Greene and

Meissner knows that the slaying of backlogs is not an end in and of itself. Rather, it is a necessary task in managing archival programs efficiently and effectively, and a step toward “professional maturity”—the honest assessment of what is and is not possible given the conditions under which we work.⁴

An attendee of the 2006 Midwest Archives Symposium on minimal processing asked “what was new” about minimal processing, citing years of similar processing practices in his shop. Indeed, in some ways, this attendee was correct that nothing was new; some archivists had implemented MPLP long before it was known as such. But, as Matt Gorzalski points out, Greene and Meissner “collected and formally presented these ideas to the profession,” lending them professional credibility and heightened visibility.⁵ Additionally, Greene and Meissner gave archivists both practical reasons and permission to set their sights beyond the care and maintenance of our collections.

In that vein, this essay considers what comes after MPLP. For the solo archivist, the elimination of the backlog might be viewed as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it represents a great achievement—in many cases, single-handedly overcoming a resource-starved work environment to provide unprecedented access to materials. But, on the other hand, a lone arranger without a backlog might feel like Sisyphus without his boulder. The professional identities of many lone arrangers, and perhaps many archivists employed in larger shops, seem to have been shaped by years of serving the endless needs of documents—accessioning, appraising, arranging, describing, and preserving. When a large backlog has been processed using minimum standards, it might be tempting to indulge in the fantasy of returning to partially processed collections and finishing the job. But would that be the best use of our limited resources?

General Management Considerations

Before delving into such projects, we would be better served to step back and reconsider the assumptions that solo archivists bring to their work. A solo archivist may be either an archivist who works completely alone or an archivist assisted only by paraprofessional staff. The worldview of the solo archivist is most visible in his or her management practices—how the solo archivist uses his or her time, prioritizes tasks, and nurtures the archival program. Management, commonly understood as the supervision of personnel and budgets, might seem irrelevant to lone arrangers working in a small archives that may lack one or both. Unfortunately, the management of such one-person archives is largely overlooked in our profession. Many solo archivist position descriptions do not overtly mention managing, and a small archives typically occupies an obscure corner of the larger institution’s organizational chart. Yet in 1963 management expert Peter Drucker wrote that the manager’s job “is to direct the resources of business towards opportunities for economically significant results.”⁶ Because many of us in the archives world are not accustomed to thinking about profit, if his statement were modified to read “a manager directs the resources of business toward socially, culturally, or economically significant results,” then there would be no question that every solo archivist is a manager.

In his 2001 article “Leadership of Archival Programs,” Bruce W. Dearstyne identifies many reasons why archivists generally like to keep their distance from management—management activities are perceived to be too demanding, not that important, or simply beyond the scope of archival practice. Too many of us consider our technical archival work—mostly processing—as the “real” job, while our management work is dismissed as “getting the job done in the least possible time and lowest possible cost,” or simply “common sense.”⁷ Management, a discipline within the field of business, also bears the stain of association with corporate America and consumerism, which are distasteful to some in our profession.⁸ Yet as Barbara L. Craig argued in 1990, archivists have long applied concepts from the business world to their work because they “helped archives to clarify their role in a changing record environment.”⁹

Because lone arrangers manage their programs primarily by managing themselves—both in terms of their time and their approach to their work—they cannot afford to neglect the managerial aspects of their jobs. And yet just embracing management is not enough—solo archivists must also scrutinize the assumptions upon which their management practices rest. Management based on false beliefs may be worse than no deliberate management at all.

In a 1994 article, “The Theory of the Business,” Drucker describes an all-too-common management phenomenon—the stagnation and decline of organizations with long and successful histories. Drucker argues that the problem in such situations lies not in sloppy, inefficient, or ineffective practices, but rather in the dissonance between the environment in which the organization flourished and the current conditions in which it now functions. When an organization clings to outdated assumptions, Drucker argues, it operates from a core set of beliefs about itself, its customers, and its environment that inflict more harm than good. These beliefs, which Drucker calls the “theory of the business,” play a critical role because they “shape any organization’s behavior, dictate its decisions about what to do and what not to do, and define what the organization considers meaningful results.”¹⁰

Drucker’s “theory of the business” rests on three distinct sets of assumptions regarding the environment or climate in which the business functions, the mission and goals of the business, and the necessary skills to accomplish the work of the business.¹¹ Ironically, given the importance of these assumptions to organizational health, they often remain unstated and therefore may be difficult to recognize and to change. Seeking to explore the current theory of the small archives business, we can apply Drucker’s paradigm to the literature on archives and archives management, particularly the management of lone arranger shops. After examining explicit and tacit assumptions in the small archives business, alternative visions of small archives management will be proposed. While the following recommendations are based on experience, they are grounded in the professional literature on management and library and information science.

Environment: Solo Archivists versus the World

One of the impediments to writing about the management of small archives is the lack of literature on the subject.¹² Archives management texts do not address in any

depth the possibilities and pitfalls of managing oneself and an archival program simultaneously. Furthermore, while the literature that exists on lone arranger shops is engaging, humorous, and useful in providing practical tips, it is also well seasoned with negativity, cynicism, and an acceptance of the lone arranger's lack of power. Erik Nordberg's column, "The Lone Arranger," published in the *MAC Newsletter* from 1997 to 2002, provides a prime example of this genre. Nordberg's cast of characters (the "Big Archives Machine," or large repository), provocative titles ("The Customer's Always Right? What a Bunch of Bunk!"), and concluding statements ("Of course, the Boss probably has no idea what's in those [archival] boxes. But this is as it should be.") typify the sarcasm that underlies many articles and conference sessions aimed at solo archivists.¹³

Some lone arrangers, it seems, truly identify with our namesake, the Lone Ranger; we are underdogs who fight for truth, justice, and the archival way. Our long list of enemies includes demanding users, insensitive and ignorant bosses, and privileged archivists employed by large and well-funded (or at least better-funded) institutions. All of our actions serve an abstract and lofty goal—the preservation of the historical record—and we operate under truly adverse conditions.

Additionally, it seems that some of us really do not mind wearing the Lone Ranger's mask. A fear and loathing of archives users pervades the literature on small archives management. Well-controlled outreach efforts are ideal, for truly informed archives users might overwhelm us with reference questions or requests for materials we are not yet ready to show—materials in a state of physical or intellectual chaos, or unprocessed materials that might contain confidential information.¹⁴ In sum, it appears that far too many lone arrangers understand their work environment as a small fortress under siege and approach their work as a solitary struggle against the overwhelming external forces stacked against them. The lone arranger seems to lack control and agency at the workplace.

The comparison of lone arranger management literature to that of solo librarians reveals striking differences in management approaches and cultures. Works written by and for solo librarians are optimistic, but not unrealistic, and demonstrate business savvy unknown to lone arrangers.¹⁵ Three distinct themes emerge from the solo library management literature. First, the solo library management literature embraces public service as the core mission.¹⁶ Library functions, including cataloging, collection development, and facilities and technology management, provide means to the end of outstanding service to library users. Second, the literature exhorts solo librarians to accept limitations inherent to their positions and work around them. It does not dwell on the activities and resources of bigger and better-funded libraries. Rather, solo librarians are reminded to reflect upon the "big difference between limited services and substandard ones" and prioritize accordingly.¹⁷ Third, and most important, the one-person library literature devotes much attention to the solo librarian's personal characteristics. "The success of a one-person library and its services is often a direct reflection of the attitude and personality of the librarian in charge."¹⁸ Authors identify specific traits—adaptability, an ability to work independently, a willingness to take risks, and an ability to advocate on behalf of the library—as indispensable and, in the end, more important than funding, facilities, and other external resources.¹⁹ The

literature on solo library management empowers librarians to control their work environment rather than being controlled or defeated by difficult situations. “YOU [author’s emphasis] are your library,” one solo librarian declares.²⁰ Complaining about problems beyond one’s control is universally condemned in the literature as a waste of valuable time and energy.²¹

Comparing the literature on small archives and small library management, it seems fair to conclude that the business of small archives and the business of small libraries have less in common than one might assume. Lone arrangers tend to focus on the limitations of their environments, while solo librarians seek the possibilities inherent in those same limitations. Similarly, many lone arrangers attribute failure to external forces and appear willing to content themselves with small victories won in the hard-fought war of archives administration. Solo librarians, as represented in the literature, attribute failure to internal forces and seek lasting and meaningful solutions to long-term problems in themselves. Are we to conclude, then, that lone arrangers are the Eeyores and solo librarians the Tiggers of the information science world? Perhaps not, but our respective literatures certainly give that impression.

Would the mission of small archival programs change if our assumptions about our environment exchanged defeatism, fear, and helplessness for optimism, confidence, and agency? Would we be any less committed to the core values of the archives profession if we swapped our external locus of control for an internal one? Absolutely not. In fact, we have everything to gain by abandoning our “lone arranger” moniker and declaring a cease fire in the fruitless battle that hurts nobody but ourselves. Our perceptions of success and our abilities to achieve them, however, might change in such a way as to breathe new life into stagnant archival programs and build ties between solo archivists and their users.

Mission: Which Comes First, Collections or Users?

In fall 2007, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) sponsored a “Best Elevator Speech” contest in honor of American Archives Month. Contestants were instructed to compose an “elevator speech,” or brief explanation under 30 words, “to eloquently explain your professional calling.”²² The winning speech, penned by Lisa H. Lewis, reads: “Archivists bring the past to the present. They’re records collectors and protectors, keepers of memory. They organize unique, historical materials, making them available for current and future research.”²³ An honorable mention went to Jacquelyn Ferry, who wrote, “Archivists acquire, manage, preserve, and help patrons identify and use historically significant collections of unique materials, such as government records, manuscripts, photographs, films, and sound recordings.”²⁴

Striking about these brief summaries of the archival profession is the presence (or absence) of the archives user. The winning entry makes no mention of archives users, though their presence is implied by the reference to research at the end of the speech. The honorable mention winning statement places “patrons” at the end of a long list of archival functions involving archival materials. Others have previously noted this tendency among archives professionals. In the early 1990s, Gabrielle Blais and David

Enns observed that traditional understandings of archival work neglect public services and regard public programming “primarily as a luxury.”²⁵ While it has been argued that our founding fathers, Hilary Jenkinson and Theodore Schellenberg, recognized the importance of use for a very different public than we serve today,²⁶ current formulations of our mission as archival professionals put the records first and the archives users last—a telling phraseology in this attempt to discern assumptions behind the theory of our business.

Blais and Enns were not the first to notice the absence of the user in archival theory and practice and identify it as a serious problem. In 1985, Elsie T. Freeman’s seminal article, “Buying Quarter Inch Holes: Public Support through Results,” alerted archivists to the importance of records use. Freeman maintained that we must demonstrate “how the use of records saves money, increases efficiency, promotes good causes, or gives pleasure.”²⁷ To do that, she argued, archivists must understand why users research in archives and what constitutes the end products of archival research. Shortly thereafter, in a special issue of the *Midwestern Archivist* devoted to user studies, Roy C. Turnbaugh and Jacqueline Goggin published evidence that archives users are not who we think they are. Although Turnbaugh and Goggin reached very different conclusions, they agree that the prized scholarly users of archives are far outnumbered by administrative, genealogical, student, or avocational researchers. While Turnbaugh recommended that archivists interpret collection management duties as part of archives use, Goggin placed user behaviors and preferences close to the heart of all archival functions.²⁸

As mentioned above, the solo librarian literature emphasizes library users and their satisfaction over the collection. Despite nearly 25 years of archival professional literature to the contrary, the archives party line continues to advocate the opposite approach. In considering the mission of any archives—small or large—it is important to remember that even archives users have choices when it comes to information sources.²⁹ Student researchers, for example, might decide to work with published primary sources instead of archival material. Local historians and genealogists might content themselves with information found on the Web rather than verifying that information or seeking additional sources in the archives. Staff at your institution might choose to work with institutional memory or the oldest files in the office rather than calling the archivist. So, while our collections are unique, we should not delude ourselves that the majority of our potential users *must* come to the archives. They do not, and many of them choose not to.

Furthermore, the more we identify our mission with the care and preservation of archival and manuscript materials, the harder we have to work to bring potential users through the door. Like most workers in the modern American economy, archivists work in a service industry. The identification of our mission primarily in the “production” of processed and preserved collections threatens to eclipse or undermine our ability to thrive as service providers. We must dedicate ourselves more earnestly to producing satisfied users rather than collections that primarily satisfy our own professional ideals.³⁰

Not only solo librarians but business owners and advisers are very clear about what they provide in the service industry. They provide experiences—ideally ones that bring high satisfaction to patrons or customers. What do patrons and customers like about satisfactory experiences? Consistency, community, and comfort.³¹ These experiences

may come with a product, but ultimately it is the service accompanying the product that makes customers return.

Accessing information in historical documents constitutes part of the archives user's experience, but not all of it. It is easy for archivists to assume that users value the same things that we do when using archives and manuscripts—their organization, description, and appearance. But after years of observing archives users, I believe that archivists and users value entirely different aspects of the archival experience. Many users cast aside carefully constructed finding aids in favor of poking around in the material on their own. Anecdotally, it seems that messy collections do not faze archives users—particularly those with little archival research experience. Rather, most seem to enjoy the challenge and the excitement of going where nobody has gone before. Finally, and perhaps most surprising, the physical space of the archives may function as a “third space,” a social space that is neither home nor workplace, neither dorm nor classroom. The student users of the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire Special Collections and Archives come not only to do research but also to vent stress and frustration, to ask for help from or socialize with other students, and to laugh over the oddities they confront in their collections and in their history classes. For some, the Special Collections and Archives functions as a sort of Switzerland—a neutral space. For others, it is more like Las Vegas—what happens in the archives stays in the archives. Regardless of its metaphorical geographic location, it is a safe place for student researchers.³²

Embracing a new understanding of the archival mission—one that places the needs of users on par or above the needs of the documents—requires a radical change in thinking for many archivists. Ultimately, however, this shift will bring the theory of the business of small archives closer to the expectations of potential users. Archival mission statements might be restructured to place user needs ahead of collecting policies, so that the mission statement becomes a living document that guides daily work. Days in which nothing is preserved or processed might still be considered highly successful because users received the information and services they requested. Archivists might challenge themselves to treat the users with more care than the archival materials themselves. We might consider trying to protect our users from exposure to poor service with the commitment and zeal that we previously have applied to the protection of documents from environmental hazards. Goodwill might become the most important metric by which we assess the success of small archival programs.

Skills: The “Right Stuff” to Run a Small Archival Program

Archivists have observed for decades that the “craft aspects” of our work have been overemphasized at the expense of other professional values.³³ And yet most of us continue to cling to our craft for dear life. John Fleckner's well-known SAA presidential address, “‘Dear Mary Jane’: Some Reflections on Being an Archivist,” articulates the technique-oriented values that archivists have prized and deliberately passed on to future professionals.³⁴ Of course, Fleckner also discusses archival roles that are far more important than the technical prowess—namely, archivists' commitment to furthering a “just society” through the information carried in the archival record.³⁵ But

as we make our way daily through our work, it can be difficult to keep our attention on the ideological underpinnings of archival practice.

At least one researcher has looked to archivists' personalities to explain our passion for our craft.³⁶ Another explanation has to do with power rather than personality: processing is the area of archival administration over which the archivist has the most control. We cannot always please our users; we sometimes have to accept material we do not want; we may not have the resources to carry out necessary conservation work. But we *own* processing—particularly when there are no other professional archivists on staff to question what constitutes processing. Furthermore, we feel comfortable processing. Processing is a hallmark of the archival profession. It distinguishes archivists from librarians and records managers, and it allows us to impose order on the messy and chaotic world around us. In the age of MPLP, Fleckner's "Dear Mary Jane" appears on 15 archives management course syllabi available on the Internet; Steven L. Hensen's lesser-known "Revisiting Mary Jane, or Dear Cat: Being Archival in the 21st Century"—an article that emphasizes the growing similarities between librarians and archivists and the importance of data and content standards in the digital world—appears on only three syllabi.³⁷

Our passion for processing has created problems, which, of course, Greene and Meissner pointed out—backlogs. Backlogs create disappointed archives users and resource allocators, which in turn damages our professional reputations.³⁸ At this point, we might even conclude that processing owns the archival profession. We can justify our behavior by appealing to the needs of the collection, our potential users, or our professional standards. But by turning away from our most prized skills as archivists, we can ask what skills our users need us to possess.

We may take some comfort in knowing we are not the only professionals who focus on technique or craft to the detriment of all other considerations. A brief look at the popular literature on small business management reveals that our processing problem is common. Michael Gerber, a small business consultant, concisely states the flawed thinking that can undermine small shop archivists and small business owners alike: "The Fatal Assumption is: *if you understand the technical work of a business, you understand a business that does technical work.*"³⁹ If you make this assumption as a lone arranger, the freedom and flexibility inherent to your work are eclipsed by a sense of enslavement to your collections and your physical environment. No matter how good your craft is, archivists will not succeed by craft alone. We must pay attention to the bigger picture and cultivate skills that may not be unique to archivists—skills associated with keeping a business afloat.⁴⁰

Aside from our prized technical skills, what other skills might a lone arranger need to create and maintain a successful archival program? Many readers will be relieved to hear that accounting, marketing, and strategic planning are not the most important skills solo archivists should possess. Rather, we must cultivate skills that help us "sell" ourselves and our repositories in the most genuine and sincere way possible: self-knowledge and empathy.⁴¹ In the ever-growing world of digital information resources, these might not seem to be the skills that will carry our profession into the future. But it is precisely these skills that will make encounters with a small shop archivist both

enjoyable and memorable to users—whether that encounter be face to face, through E-mail, on a Web site, or through Facebook.

Self-knowledge is critical to helping lone arrangers understand with whom they work best and to whom their archival programs will appeal most. Proceeding from our first revised assumption about the small archives business—that we, the solo archivists, exercise control over the success of our programs—it stands to reason that our personalities and preferences may attract some users and repel others. Ideally, we will attract more than we repel, but it is unrealistic to think that everybody will flock to your archival program if you market yourself loudly and abundantly enough. By understanding yourself and the people who gravitate toward you, you can deliberately cultivate a “fan base” that will become your best ally and advocate.

Because we do not want archival programs that appeal only to fellow archivists and historians, we need empathy to understand, respect, and effectively communicate with other archives users—potential and actual. Without empathy, we cannot invest ourselves in finding out what our users need from their archival experiences and making the fulfillment of those needs our top priority. A recent article in *Strategy & Business*, a professional journal for business executives, discusses libraries’ efforts to remain not only relevant but vibrant, as free Web-based information providers supercede many print resources in libraries’ collections. The authors argue that the libraries successfully managing the challenge of Internet competitors are those that are “redefining the business [they are] in.”⁴² These libraries, mostly public, have implemented user-centered programming and services to create satisfying experiences for their users. In contrast, the authors maintain, research libraries struggle because they have continued to cultivate collections without asking whether these collections suit their users. Familiar with libraries’ perpetual lack of financial resources, the authors suggest that research libraries spend fewer resources on collections and more on innovative user services that will build communities and offer a personalized and human touch to information seeking.⁴³ As repositories of record, archives may be more similar to research libraries than public libraries, but archival programs must take seriously the needs of our users and develop initiatives to meet those needs.

What might these initiatives look like? That will depend very much on the users that each individual repository serves. A successful initiative in one community of archives users might fail in another. At the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, the archival program functions primarily as a support service provider for selected academic departments. We started with the history department, of course, but have now expanded into the women’s studies program and the English department. My small student and paraprofessional staff and I provide as many additional services as possible while we locate and retrieve documents for use. The archives serves as a “one-stop-shopping” point not because we provide instant access—historical research is not about instant access. Rather, we provide a range of services, some of which seem far out of the scope of traditional archives work, so that students and faculty are not tossed from one library or campus office to another for assistance that falls outside of the archival world. In other words, we provide archival and non-archival services together, with the understanding that most archives users do not structure their lives around the categories “archival” and “non-archival.”

As a result, our archival program devotes substantial time to activities beyond traditional archival functions. We not only help the students find paper topics, but we make time to listen to them talk through their topics when the research and analysis get tough. We teach students to analyze primary and secondary sources on the fly. We act as informal advisers to students who cannot connect with their adviser of record, recommending courses to fit students' interests and fulfill distribution requirements. We cultivate inside jokes that create a sense of community and belonging—for example, giving out silly door prizes to remind both students and faculty that “all this hard work pays off” in more than one way.⁴⁴ We help them find non-archival information—even if it is for a biology class. We proofread students' bibliographies before they turn them in for final grades, and we even proofread their papers and correct their grammar if they ask us to. These last activities win us gratitude and goodwill not only with the students but also with the faculty who would otherwise have to correct the bibliographies and grammatical errors.

All of these non-archival activities, paradoxically, have made our archival program stronger. They build up our reputation as a good place with helpful people. They keep our user numbers high, even if those users are students who stop in simply to say hello, report on their research, and enjoy the archives community rather than use archival materials. They encourage students and faculty to ask us for other things they need. There is no question that we retain our identity as an archives and continue to perform core archival functions. But rather than being just the room in the library with old stuff, restricted hours, and no coffee, we are an archives that seeks to make users' lives easier through our services. We are committed not only to records in the context of their creation but also to users in the context of their lives.

Opportunities in the Business of Small Archives

Elsie T. Freeman introduced archivists to a fundamental principle of marketing: “people do not buy possibilities; they buy results.” In the archival world, this translates into an understanding that archives users “do not want to know what an archives contains, or what archivists do. They want solutions to problems.”⁴⁵ Just a few years later, Timothy L. Ericson proposed a new mission statement for archival enterprise: “To ensure the availability and use of records of enduring value by identification, acquisition, description, and preservation.” This formulation that prioritizes users' interests, he argued, would compel archivists to “concentrate on why we are doing what we are doing, rather than simply how well we are doing it.”⁴⁶ These two articles provide a recipe for a successful archival program—promoting our services and collections from the users' point of view and administering our repositories in the larger context of our users' lives. While the profession has for some time acknowledged the importance of public services and outreach, they still are not central, unfortunately, to our understanding of our jobs; particularly in smaller archives, the records themselves and the difficulty of managing them continue to hold a grip over our intellectual and emotional energy.

In the future, the survival of archival programs will depend on our ability to remain positive under adverse conditions, to put the needs of our users before the needs of our collections, and to understand our users and their needs in the digital world. Released by MPLP from the burden of meticulously grooming our collections, we can finally turn our attention from our professional microcosm to the larger context in which archives users operate. Small archival programs are uniquely positioned to be innovators and leaders in this area. Because lone arrangers are providers of both public and technical services, we can focus on users by reallocating our time and attention—actions that seldom require formal approval from our supervisors. We have the freedom and flexibility to try new programming and services, quickly assess their success, and continue or discontinue them accordingly. We can cultivate individual relationships with users and come to understand and anticipate their needs. If we can allow ourselves to see them, the opportunities lone arrangers can enjoy in revolutionizing archival public services and programming are countless.

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NOTES

1. Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," *American Archivist* 68:2 (2005). Articles discussing the implementation of minimal processing include: Anne L. Foster, "Minimum Standards Processing and Photograph Collections," *Archival Issues* 30:2 (2006); Janet Hauke, "How to Get More 'Product' While Doing Less 'Process,'" *Archival Outlook* (May/June 2008); Donna McCrae, "Getting More for Less: Testing a New Processing Model at the University of Montana," *American Archivist* 69:2 (2006); Michael Strom, "Texas-Sized Progress: Applying Minimum-Standards Processing Guidelines to the Jim Wright Papers," *Archival Issues* 29:2 (2005); and Christine Weideman, "Accessioning as Processing," *American Archivist* 69:2 (2006).
2. Initial results from the survey were recently released in Shannon Bowen Maier, "American Heritage Center Conducts User Survey," *RAO Newsletter* 16 (July 2009).
3. Colleen McFarland, "It Changed My Life: Lessons Learned from Minimal Processing," Midwest Archives Conference, http://www.midwestarchives.org/2006_Fall/presentations.html (accessed January 22, 2009).
4. Greene and Meissner, "More Product, Less Process," 255.
5. Matt Gorzalski, "Minimal Processing: Its Context and Influence in the Archival Community," *Journal of Archival Organization* 6:3 (2008): 187.
6. Peter F. Drucker, "Managing for Business Effectiveness," *Harvard Business Review* 41:3 (1963): 54.
7. Bruce W. Dearstyne, "Leadership of Archival Programs," in *Leadership and Administration of Archival Programs*, ed. Bruce W. Dearstyne (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), 113–114.
8. See, for example, Terry Cook, "Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–1991): 124–125.

9. Barbara L. Craig, "What Are the Clients: Who Are the Products: The Future of Archival Public Services in Perspective," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–1991): 139.
10. Peter F. Drucker, "The Theory of the Business," *Harvard Business Review* 72:5 (1994): 96.
11. *Ibid.*, 99–100.
12. There is only one peer-reviewed journal article specifically on small archives management: Susan Pevar, "Success as a Lone Arranger: Setting Priorities and Getting the Job Done," *Journal of Archival Organization* 3:2 (2005). Frank G. Burke addresses the advantages and disadvantages of managing a one-person repository and concludes that "management in a small archives where the archival worker is also the archival manager provides little opportunity to develop managerial and leadership skills." Frank G. Burke, "The Art of the Possible: The Archivist as Administrator," in Dearstyne, *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs*, 22.
13. Erik Nordberg, "Episode 3: Home Schooling on the Range," *MAC Newsletter* 25:3 (1997): 8; Erik Nordberg, "Episode 14: The Customer's Always Right? What a Bunch of Bunk!" *MAC Newsletter* 28:2 (2000): 17; Erik Nordberg, "Episode 12: Your Friend, the Archival Box," *MAC Newsletter* 27:4 (2000): 14. These issues of the *MAC Newsletter* are available in box 99 of the Midwest Archives Conference Records, UWM Manuscript Collection 194, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
14. Pevar, "Success as a Lone Arranger," 58.
15. See, for example, Judith A. Seiss, *The New OPL Sourcebook: A Guide for Solo and Small Libraries* (Medford, N.J.: Information Today, 2005); Guy St. Clair and Joan Williamson, *Managing the New One-Person Library* (London: Bowker Saur, 1992); Andrew Berner and Guy St. Clair, *The Best of OPL II: Selected Readings from the One-Person Library* (Washington, D.C.: Special Libraries Association, 1996); and Andrew Berner and Guy St. Clair, *The Best of OPL: Five Years of One-Person Library* (Washington, D.C.: Special Libraries Association, 1990).
16. St. Clair and Williamson, *Managing the New One-Person Library*, 4.
17. "Does OPL = Limited Services?" in Berner and St. Clair, *Best of OPL*, 17.
18. St. Clair and Williamson, *Managing the New One-Person Library*, 4.
19. Susan S. DiMatta, "Going Solo: Wise Is a Force of One," *Library Journal* 125:12 (2000); Judith A. Seiss, "Flying Solo: Librarian, Manage Thyself," *American Libraries* 30:2 (1999); Suzanne R. Teghtmeyer, "Solo Librarianship at the Paul Evans Library of Fruit Science, Missouri State University," *Quarterly Bulletin of the International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists* 50:3/4 (2005).
20. Teghtmeyer, "Solo Librarianship," 127.
21. DiMatta, "Going Solo," 41; St. Clair and Williamson, *Managing the New One-Person Library*, 98.
22. "Say What? The First Annual 'Best Elevator Speech' Contest—With Prizes!" *Archival Outlook* (September/October 2007): 6.
23. Society of American Archivists, "Best Elevator Speech Contest Winner," Society of American Archivists, <http://www.archivists.org/news/2008ElevatorSpeech.asp> (accessed January 22, 2009).
24. *Ibid.*
25. Gabrielle Blais and David Enns, "From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–1991): 101.
26. Craig, "What Are the Clients," 138.
27. Elsie T. Freeman, "Buying Quarter Inch Holes: Public Support through Results," *The Midwestern Archivist* 10:2 (1985): 97.
28. Roy C. Turnbaugh, "Archival Mission and User Studies," *The Midwestern Archivist* 9:1 (1986): 27–33; Jacqueline Goggin, "The Indirect Approach: A Study of Scholarly Users of Black and Women's Organizational Records in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division," *The Midwestern Archivist* 9:1 (1986): 57–67.
29. Both Freeman and Goggin remind us that archival research is seldom essential. In many cases, published works contain adequate information for researchers of all types. Freeman, "Buying Quarter Inch Holes," 90; Goggin, "Indirect Approach," 60–61.
30. The concept of users as "products" of archives is well articulated by Barbara Craig. Craig, "What Are the Clients," 141.
31. There are many excellent books about customer satisfaction and how to create it. See, for example, Harry Beckwith, *What Clients Love: A Field Guide to Growing Your Business* (New York: Warner Books, 2003).

32. Archivists would be well served to familiarize themselves with the “library as place” literature. See, for example, John E. Buschman and Gloria J. Leckie, eds., *The Library as Place: History, Community, and Culture* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007).
33. F. Gerald Ham, “Archival Strategies for the Post-Custodial Era,” *American Archivist* 44 (Summer 1981).
34. John Fleckner, “‘Dear Mary Jane’: Some Reflections on Being an Archivist,” *American Archivist* 54 (Winter 1991).
35. *Ibid.*, 26.
36. Barbara Lazenby Craig, “Canadian Archivists: What Types of People Are They?” *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000).
37. Steven L. Hensen, “Revisiting Mary Jane, or, Dear Cat: Being Archival in the 21st. Century,” *American Archivist* 65 (Fall/Winter 2002): 168–175.
38. Greene and Meissner, “More Product, Less Process,” 209.
39. Michael E. Gerber. *The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1995), 13.
40. *Ibid.*, 17–18.
41. The importance of these skills to the success of very small businesses, or microbusinesses, is discussed in “Working Class Acupuncture,” in *Love Your Microbusiness: Marketing for a Community-Based Acupuncture Practice*, <http://www.workingclassacupuncture.org/files/e-book.pdf> (accessed July 15, 2009). While written specifically for acupuncturists, the principles presented in this booklet are useful to every sole proprietor or person who is their business. Additionally, for those who question the relevance of acupuncture to the archives profession, see Colleen McFarland, “Acupuncturists and Archivists: A Tale of Two Professions,” *Acupuncture Today* 8:6 (2007), <http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/mpacms/at/article.php?id=31521> (accessed December 1, 2009).
42. Scott Corwin, Elisabeth Hartley, and Harry Hawkes, “The Library Rebooted,” in *Strategy & Business* 54 (Spring 2009): 81.
43. *Ibid.*, 89.
44. Quotation from Josh Jordan, a University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire senior, upon winning cupcake-flavored dental floss as a door prize, October 30, 2009, <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Eau-Claire-WI/University-of-Wisconsin-Eau-Claire-Special-Collections-Archives/20545512304?ref=sgm> (accessed December 1, 2009).
45. Freeman, “Buying Quarter Inch Holes,” 89.
46. Timothy L. Ericson, “Preoccupied with Our Own Gardens: Outreach and Archivist,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–1991): 117.