Familiarize yourself with the core/traditional archival professional functions of archival appraisal, acquisition and accessioning. Investigate the historic Schellenberg and Jenkinson appraisal models and even venture to consider the Canadian macro-appraisal approach.

According to the appraisal policy set by the National Archives and Records Administration, “what is of relatively low research use today may become of great research use in the future” (National Archives and Records Administration, 2007). I think this is probably something that gets lost when it comes to appraising records. We tend to forget that the records we have today may not be significant now, but it could be very important in the future, which makes deciding what to keep and what not indeed very difficult. I don’t agree with Hilary Jenkinson’s belief that archivists should not appraise records or that the record creators should decide (Daulby, 2014). Having one person to decide is quite the pressure, and as such I’m assuming that today, there is a committee who makes the decision. Perhaps during the time of Jenkinson’s lifetime, there wasn’t a whole lot of options or talks of preserving records or understanding the great importance of them, but today there is.

We know that society changes with the times, and as such ideas and values change. And as things change we adapt to them and move on. So I think that reinventing appraisal process is a good thing because what worked then may not work now, although I do believe that there should be some common foundation that way things don’t constantly change and cause confusions. For example, in 2003, The National Archives from the United Kingdom recommended to adopt a process-oriented approach, thus The Seamless Flow Programme was created. (Dearstyne, 2008). The program creates “a seamless flow of digital records from creation in government departments, to preservation in the archives, through to delivery on the Internet” (Dearstyne, 2008). The program is divided into a number of projects, which include the appraisal and selection process. The objective was to “develop procedures and selection criteria to guide the appraisal of digital records” and determine which records will go to The National Archives (Dearstyne, 2008). In the end it was discovered that there was a need of new appraisal methodologies (Dearstyne, 2008).

References

Daulby, L. (2014). Archival selection, appraisal, acquisition, & accessioning. MARA 200-10. Lecture conducted from San Jose State University, San Jose, CA.
