PROCEEDINGS FROM THE JUNE 12, 2019, MEETING:

# ADVANCING FOUNDATION ARCHIVES

## Advocacy, Strategies, and Solutions

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*Dedicated to*

*Nicolette "Nicki" Lodico*
*Friend, Colleague, and Tireless Advocate for Foundation Archives*

# Foreword: A Meeting Thirty Years Overdue

In 1990, the Rockefeller Archive Center and the Council on Foundations held a symposium entitled "Foundation Archives: Information, Access, and Research" that brought information managers and archivists together to discuss the challenges they faced in building, preserving, and providing access to the records created by the foundations they served. One result of that gathering was the publication of a slim volume called *Establishing Foundation Archives: A Reader and Guide to First Steps* (1991) edited by Kenneth W. Rose and Darwin H. Stapleton.

As I stepped into my first role as archivist for a foundation in 2018, I looked high and low for guidance. By then, *Establishing Foundation Archives* was long out of print, but I managed to find a copy. It provided reassurance that I was not lost in the woods but on a path others had walked ahead of me. Another more recent publication, "The Archives of U.S. Foundations: An Endangered Species" (2012) by John E. Craig, Jr., at the time executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Commonwealth Fund, laid out a strong case for creating and maintaining a foundation archive as a critical activity.

In June 2019, the Rockefeller Archive Center along with the Ford Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, co-hosted a second symposium nearly thirty years after the first. Advancing Foundation Archives: Advocacy, Strategies, and Solutions brought together archivists, grants managers, foundation leaders, information specialists, historians, legal experts, and many others to share ideas, practices, and resources. Most importantly, its goal was to build a community of archives advocates confronting a new and daunting challenge — how to collect, preserve, and provide access to the rising tide of born-digital records created by foundations. If the two publications mentioned above paved the way forward, the Advancing Foundation Archives meeting showed me that I had company on the journey.

All of the presentations delivered during the one-day conference are available on the Rockefeller Archive Center YouTube channel (**https://bit.ly/3hfIshv**). The publication you are now reading represents a distillation of the topics, conversations, concerns, and solutions shared by twenty-one speakers and over one hundred participants. Our hope is that it helps fertilize the growth of more foundation archives and gives confidence and support to those tasked with this work.

Lori Eaton, CA, MLIS
September 2021

*Establishing Foundation Archives* is now available in a digitized version on IssueLab. **www.issuelab.org/resource/establishing-foundation-archives-a-reader-and-guide-to-first-steps.html**

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# 1 Introduction

**This publication represents an abridged, synthesized version of the panels, presentations, and table discussions that took place at the Advancing Foundation Archives: Advocacy, Strategies, and Solutions conference, held on June 12, 2019, in the Mandela Room of the Ford Foundation headquarters in New York City. The conference was co-sponsored by the Rockefeller Archive Center, Ford Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, and it was the first convening in nearly three decades to address the importance of managing, preserving, and providing access to foundation records and archives.**

Though more than one hundred people attended, many more stand to benefit from a resource that captures key learnings. To present the meeting in text form, the editors condensed one hundred pages of transcripts, fleshed out concepts where needed, and gathered additional resources for readers who wish to delve deeper into a particular topic. Most of the quotations are taken verbatim from the conference transcripts, but some have been lightly edited for clarity and conciseness.

As Jack Meyers, president of the Rockefeller Archive Center, said in his closing remarks at the meeting, foundation archivists now take it as a given that the records they collect have value. Nonetheless, there are other decision makers (and readers) to whom a clearer picture of the value of foundation archives might be useful. Imagine that a program officer is researching a new grantmaking program to support young artists, and a long-time staff member mentions a similar program funded in the early 1990s. If that foundation has maintained an archive over the years, the program officer will be able to find notes, board documents, approved grants, and even evaluations that will clarify how that program was developed, what worked, and perhaps most importantly, what didn't. If the foundation does not have an archive, the program officer may be able to hunt down some of the relevant documents but, more than likely, pertinent records will be in boxes tucked away in offsite storage, buried in a network shared drive, or saved in file formats that are no longer readable by today's systems. Research scenarios like this may play out across the organization, from the CEO who is writing a speech and wants to know what a long-ago predecessor was thinking on a particular topic, to a financial analyst developing a report on grant payout trends over the life of the foundation. As John Craig wrote in 2012, "Archival records enrich the research base for consideration of foundations' future directions and help ensure program continuity. The lessons from earlier experience that they hold can help prevent strategic and tactical mistakes by current and future foundation managers."

A well-managed archive supports staff by providing institutional knowledge that helps move the foundation forward. In a similar way, providing public access to a foundation's archive can help strengthen ties to the communities it serves. Foundations that believe in transparency and make the decision to open their archive to the public demonstrate a willingness to be held accountable for their impact on society. Even though foundations may restrict records for five, ten, even twenty-five years before access is granted, by building an archive they are committing to preserving records that contain unique information about the communities, issues, people, and organizations they fund through their grantmaking. When those records are open, researchers benefit from a rich, well-preserved store of information about the history of philanthropy. "In the hands of good researchers, the records of foundations can provide guidance for future generations in tackling new and continuing social problems" (Craig, 2012). Historians conducting research in foundation archives have been able to track the birth of educational broadcast television through the records of the Ford Foundation, the ebb and flow of healthcare funding in rural communities through the records of the Commonwealth Fund, and the international response to the humanitarian crisis in the South Caucasus in 1915-16 through the records of the Near East Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.

The information professionals and foundation staff who gathered in New York on June 12, 2019, shared the belief that creating, preserving, and providing access to foundation records are critical activities, whether they are done to provide access only to staff or to external researchers as well.

In addition to a shared belief in the value of foundation archives, attendees also shared challenges:

- Which documents, digital and physical, should be classified as records, and where should they be stored?
- Which records, digital and physical, have archival value, and how and where should they be preserved?
- What risks are foundations taking by preserving certain types of records, and what are the risks if they don't?
- Whose history is being erased by deleting records that contain evidence of the foundation's work?
- How do foundations responsibly share their archive publicly yet respect the privacy of staff, grantees, and, in some cases, founders?

These are among the questions that meeting participants discussed throughout the day, and those conversations are synthesized in this publication in the following sections:

**PERSPECTIVES OF FOUNDATION STAKEHOLDERS** describes how stakeholders in foundations engage (or do not engage) with their archive. This includes board members and foundation executive leaders, but also staff across the foundation who often are the most prolific record creators.

**MOTIVATING ISSUES AND EVENTS** examines some of the scenarios that often give rise to the idea of building an archive — a major anniversary, a retiring board chair, a litigation threat — how attendees wrestled with those ideas, and where they turned for help.

**RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES** discusses information management, from documents, to email, to audio and video files, to data sets, and how information managers are building infrastructure to handle the tidal wave of digital files.

**INTERNAL ACCESS AND STORYTELLING** explores how describing and applying metadata to records can help staff more easily find and use their archive to inform their work.

**PUBLIC ACCESS AND STORYTELLING** describes how foundations make their history accessible to the public, from exhibits, to published histories, to transitioning their archive to an external repository.

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Along the way, readers will find anecdotes, tips, and resources that colleagues shared through presentations, as well as in conversations during and after the conference.

The information assets that are created and received by staff at a foundation come in many shapes and sizes. Think paper-based text files, but also emails and their attachments, videos, images, audio recordings, social media posts, web sites, data sets, computer code, and formats of the future that have not been conceived of yet. The processes involved in managing records and archives have a sifting effect on the flow of assets in an organization. Not every email, report, or spreadsheet is a record, not every record is archival. With that said, here are a few definitions:

**Record:** *Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.*[1]

**Records management:** *Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.*[2]

**Archival record:** *Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs that are preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator.*[3]

Information governance and knowledge management are two other terms often associated with records management and archives. Information governance is a broader term that encompasses an organization's policies and systems that guide what information is managed, where, and for how long. Records management and archives programs are often a subset of an organization's information governance plan. Knowledge management was once limited to the management and use of information created by an organization, but more recently the concept of knowledge management has widened to include educational or informational resources from outside the organization such as databases, publications, and mined data. These two terms reach beyond the scope of discussions and presentations at the 2019 Advancing Foundation Archives meeting but are worthy of further exploration at future convenings.

1 ISO 15489-1:2016(E). 3.14
2 Ibid, 3.15
3 https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/archival-record.html

# 2 Opening Remarks

by Darren Walker, president, Ford Foundation

*(with minor edits)*

**Archives, history, narrative. Our society is informed by people like you who document, archive, and preserve our history, and our history tells us who we are as a people and as a society. Philanthropy has played a critical role in shaping who we were as a people. And so, the work that you do is critical. It's critical to our civilization, it's critical to our democracy because this democracy depends on knowing who we are and being inspired, finding from those narratives stories that help us dream and help us believe, even in dark times, what is possible.**

When Nicki [Lodico, Director of Information Management, Ford Foundation] told me that this conference was happening I said, "Thirty years? This conference should happen every year! Why aren't we doing this on an ongoing basis? Nicki, we have to do this more often." Seriously, we'll help fund it. I mean, it's a really important thing. This is hugely important. And I'm really grateful to all of the co-sponsors who made this day possible.

Now, of course, in this digital era there are new challenges that come when we think about how we preserve our history. So how do we think about long-term preservation of digital records because it is not easy to organize, especially for people like me, how to think about recording all of it. I have PDFs of McGeorge Bundy's correspondence, of Henry Ford II's notes, of all sorts of things that give me an insight and a window into the Ford Foundation's history, and with the help of Nicki and her team I've become more aware of what I need to do because the task is not a simple one. Because this president does less of the things that McGeorge Bundy used to do, which was to take handwritten notes from a program officer about the Civil Rights Program and write in the margins, and then have someone else do the same, and all in just one document. I don't do that. I get a Word document, or an Excel spreadsheet and I make little notes and annotations in the side, but I'm not really sure exactly how that's going to be preserved. Fortunately, the team here has helped me to be thoughtful that when I am doing the work of the president of the Foundation, I am doing it in a digital era. I am thinking about the future and thinking about preserving a record so that future presidents can benefit from the things that this president does right and wrong and the lessons learned, just as I have. Because the amazing thing about this Foundation is the remarkable record that has been left over eight decades. We are enormously grateful to our colleagues at the Rockefeller Archive Center because you all have made the most efficient and most robust archive available, not just to scholars, because scholars are a first line of people interested, but there are people beyond scholars, as you know, who are interested in the work.

## We can't take impact seriously if we don't take the preservation of our history seriously and we're not willing to invest in it.

I think that today, during a time of growing inequality and a time of growing cynicism about wealth and even about philanthropy, there is greater demand on us to be transparent in ways that we haven't had to be in the past. We remain the only sector in our society that does not have an external check on us. Yes, we have the IRS, and yes, we have regulations, and our general counsel keeps us out of trouble. But I worked at a bank. I worked at a nonprofit. Every day there was external pressure on me and the organizations I worked for to deliver for customers, clients, people living in Harlem who we were there to serve. Every day I felt that pressure. If we're to be honest with ourselves about philanthropy, we don't feel that pressure. We feel a different pressure. A passion to do justice in the world and to make a difference, and to cure and solve some of these seemingly intractable problems. But it really takes a lot of self-generated determination to be transparent, to monitor one's institutions and to really take impact seriously. We can't take impact seriously if we don't take the preservation of our history seriously and we're not willing to invest in it. It starts with the president and the board. It is incumbent on every board of a legacy foundation, and even newly created foundations and donors, to see the work of people like you, so that they can understand the history that they are making and their responsibility to preserve that history and to tell their story. So, sharing knowledge, sharing what we are learning, thinking about how preservation helps us during this time when we've got so much risk assessment going on, how preserving history, our records, our documents, can help us mitigate risk.

For me, as I think about the Ford Foundation's history and my own personal interest, I love history and I love being at the Ford Foundation because there is so much history, and so much of the history is personal. In 1965, I was a little boy in a small town in rural Texas sitting on the front porch of our little shotgun house, and a lady walked up to the porch, and she said to my mother that she was there to talk about a new government program that was going to be starting that summer. The program was called Head Start. I was enrolled in Head Start, and I was lucky enough to be in the first Head Start class. Lo and behold, when I came to the Ford Foundation I said, "I need to know our history. I'd love to know more about our history." Somewhere along the line someone said, "Oh, well, Darren was in Head Start," and of course what happens? In just a matter of hours, Nicki Lodico presents me with binders upon binders on the Ford Foundation's investment in a research project at Yale University in the early '60s, which made the recommendation to the then new Department of Economic Opportunity to include this program called Head Start as a part of the Great Society. I also went to college on Pell grants because I was from a low-income family and the Pell grant program was intended for students like me. Lo and behold, there in the Ford Foundation archive the Ford Foundation played a role in creating the Pell grant program, which wasn't called the Pell grant program back then. It became the Pell grant program after its efficacy was proven. Senator Claiborne Pell took it up as its great champion and made it national policy.

I could go on and on and on about the Ford Foundation's history. What preserving that history has made possible for us today is to have credibility and currency. And because we invested so meticulously, and some would say rather expensively, yes, that is true, but it has been worth every dollar we have invested. Because we are able to tell the story of Muhammad Yunus walking into the Ford Foundation's office in Bangladesh in the 1970s with a paper, an idea for something called microfinance and a vision for something called Grameen Bank, and how if the Ford Foundation got behind him, he might be able to help reduce poverty in the world. We have that documented. We have the entire narrative of Muhammad Yunus and the Ford Foundation and Grameen Bank and what he went on to do. Part of the good news of these last few years has been that poverty in the world has actually gone down, and he has contributed and the movement for microfinance contributed to that positive outcome.

As you can see, I am very enthusiastic about the work that you do. I hope you feel it. I know you're enthusiastic, and I hope your institutions, your presidents, your boards, are as enthusiastic as I am and as the Ford trustees are about that history because we can't have a future if we don't know our history. We don't know our history if we're not investing in the collection of it and the preservation of it, and in telling the story of it.

So, Nicki, thank you for allowing me to address this auspicious and marvelous, splendid group of colleagues. I'm really grateful that you're all here. And Nicki, I'm going to hold you to it. We can't wait thirty more years for another conference. Thank you all very much.

*Watch the YouTube video to view the opening remarks. Mr. Walker's remarks begin at 3:57 min.*

**https://bit.ly/3BKthGk**

# 3 Perspectives of Foundation Stakeholders

**To develop a robust archive, both leadership and front-line staff must put their weight behind the effort. An archiving program needs support from top executives to ensure adequate resources and to make the work a priority. At the same time, the people doing the day-to-day work of the foundation need to recognize the historical value of the records they are creating and participate in identifying and preserving them. With support on these two fronts, an archive can be built that helps the foundation tell its story in a way that benefits present and future staff and grantees as well as outside historians and researchers.**

## LEADERSHIP

One imperative to building an archive or records management program that colleagues at the meeting agreed on was the need for strong support from leadership. Justine Greenland Duke of the Mastercard Foundation said, "I have learned the hard way not to proceed without it. I'm not flexible about that any longer. If there isn't buy-in at the top, then I don't proceed. I keep the plan in my back pocket, but I save it for that day when somebody says, 'Oh, wouldn't it be great if?' And I can say, 'yes, it would, and I've got the plan for that.'"

Strong support from leadership, demonstrated in Ford Foundation President Darren Walker's opening remarks at the 2019 meeting, can bring resources for technology and staff. (See **Section 2** for the full text of Darren Walker's remarks.) Presidents, CEOs, vice presidents, and other well-respected staff can show they value records hygiene activities by directing staff to set aside time for organization-wide records management and clean-up days and by supporting mandatory training.

Leaders also model behaviors such as encouraging the use of the archive to research foundation history and endorsing tours of the archive as part of new staff on-boarding. Hilary Pennington, executive vice president of programs at the Ford Foundation showcased several examples from Ford's archive to illustrate how a well-tended archive helps leaders learn from the past:

> ***A foundation like ours comes under scrutiny at various points in our history. It's important to understand how we handle that when it happens, because it has happened, and it continues to happen. We responded to a series of Congressional inquiries that began in the 1950s that are legendary in the lore of philanthropy. By going back into our archive, we were able to understand how our leaders thought we were supposed to answer those kinds of questions and how they represented what philanthropy is in the broader society. And we go back to that now. As recently as the 2000s, we've had challenges to our grantmaking in Palestine, we've had the Attorney General of the State of Michigan question whether we were adequately investing in Michigan, we've had a series of issues and challenges in India. So that legacy and those archives give us a through-line, and they give us guidance today for how to adjust to things that continue to happen.***

Leadership can and should be involved in making decisions about what records belong in the archive. In the opening panel discussion, "Strategies for Successful Communication to your Stakeholders," panelists discussed the challenges of retaining or destroying certain types of records. (A complete list of sessions and panelists is available in **Appendix A**.) On one side of the equation is the need to protect the foundation from risk by adhering to compliance requirements, data privacy laws, and the risk of litigation, and on the other side is the need to preserve the foundation's history even if records will not be open to the public for ten or twenty years. Robin Krause, the attorney on the panel, said that from her perspective, the same document can be inculpatory or exculpatory depending on who is using it. She posed and then went on to answer the following question: "On balance is it better to have that document or not have that document? And I think that most lawyers would say it's always better to have the document. The balance goes to preservation." Pennington added that "we are in a moment where risk and compliance predominate, and it is really helpful to be reminded of how dangerous that can be. And I think at the highest level in foundations there probably needs to be much more debate and discussion about the consequences of that in the long run."

Beyond the question of risk, trustees, senior leadership and even founders can have a hand in shaping the foundation's archive. At the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, "the trustees, many of them lawyers, have enthusiastically embraced the idea of telling the foundation's story and sharing its impact," said Lori Eaton, the foundation's consulting archivist. "Making the trustees aware of archival best practices has helped them feel confident in the archive the foundation is building. We're also looking for ways to capture their institutional knowledge and passion for the foundation's work through interviews and storytelling, giving them some skin in the game."

At the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP), Margaret Cargill, the founder, created a vision statement that became a model for how the foundation would capture its history going forward. "When Margaret was developing the estate plan for her philanthropy after her death, our leadership felt it was really important to have an impartial third party come in and document Margaret's wishes," said Stephanie Hislop, project manager at MACP. The consultants captured what she wanted to support, what she didn't want to support, and asked clarifying questions. Not only has the resulting report guided strategic direction but it also provided a model for future legacy projects that Hislop said are "aimed at capturing and documenting not only our history but also our culture and important organizational milestones."

## FRONT LINE STAFF

Every person working on behalf of a foundation has a hand in creating that foundation's history. When all staff members, from a long-serving vice president to the newest communications officer, understand the legacy they are leaving through the records they create, the archive will be strengthened. By engaging with front line staff about the archival records they create, as well as the ways in which these records can inform their work, archivists can plant the seeds for a richer trove of records that can hold a more nuanced history of the foundation.

Michael Walter at International House and Sam Markham of the Winthrop Group worked together to build an archive for the 100-year-old institution. Two key takeaways from their project were trust and open dialog with staff and other stakeholders. "I've come to the belief that it's almost impossible to have too many conversations with stakeholders to figure out what matters to them and to speak their language," said Walter. Having multiple conversations helped them identify potential issues before they became deep-rooted problems. When an unexpected opportunity arose to speak to a large group of International House alumni, they jumped at the chance. As past archival records creators, this group has a vested interested in a well-maintained archive and a strong voice that can influence current organizational leaders.

Staff with experience as researchers in archives can share their perspective with peers and become champions of the foundation's archiving initiative. Marion Greenup, of the Simons Foundation, described a director whose research into the history of how a particular math institute was built took him into public archives. As part of a monthly staff meeting, he presented his research to the entire foundation. His presentation "focused on the importance of archiving material in addition to telling the stories he wanted to tell," said Greenup.

Elizabeth Stauber, archivist for the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, developed educational programs for staff to help them "become a self-reflective organization that is transparent not only to the public but also to ourselves." She began leading quarterly lessons for staff about past programs that the foundation had funded and how they succeeded or failed. "Now, many of our program officers have a unique understanding of the history of our foundation and mental health in Texas," said Stauber. "They can apply that context with care to the program and communities with which they work today."

Not only are foundation staff consumers of the stories in their archive, but they are also curators of their own story in relationship to the foundation. This concept was brought to life by Amy Gipson of the Gates Foundation and Jaimie Quaglino of the Gates Archive, during the Collaborative Case Studies session. The pair described a visit to the Gates Foundation India office, one of eight regional offices around the world. A primary goal of the trip was to "capture history in the making," which in real terms meant uncovering inactive program records and making sure staff at the office understood the value of transferring records to the archive. As with Walter and Markham at International House, the Gates team realized upon arrival in Delhi that they would need to be flexible. "Our plans changed as we learned about the office and its records, and our scope of what we were there to collect expanded and shifted," said Gipson. They heard staff stories informally in the lunchroom, they asked about how staff saved their files and records, and they conducted formal interviews with staff about their experience working in the India office. Gipson and Quaglino said that stronger relationships and personal connections with foundation staff were among the notable outcomes of their visit. These are two characteristics that are important for building a vital, well-used archive that reflects the stories of all stakeholders who contributed to the foundation's history.

# 4 Motivating Issues and Events

**Ask any archivist at the Advancing Foundation Archives meeting how their foundation's archive got started and you might hear a different germination story. Some might say it was a move to a new location that prompted a deeper look at what was in each closet and filing cabinet. Others might have begun as a rescue mission — boxes of old program officer diaries found gathering mold in a basement storage room. For still others it was an anniversary, retirement, or major milestone approaching. On the darker side, perhaps a looming litigation or a security breach. All these germination points have one thing in common, a ticking clock, something that brings urgency to the project.**

While the motivation that a deadline or inciting incident brings can turn an idea into a thriving archive, starting an archiving program without an urgent deadline is certainly possible with the right combination of leadership interest and staff. Conversations about data security can point organizations toward an archiving process. A focus on accountability and transparency can also spark the growth of an archive.

## ANNIVERSARIES, RETIREMENTS, AND OTHER MILESTONE EVENTS

An immoveable date on the calendar is one of the most common galvanizing events for a foundation archive. The date could be a major anniversary, the retirement of a beloved long-time staff or board member, or even a date with a moving company. While not every foundation contemplates a move, every foundation will face anniversaries on the horizon as well as staff and trustee departures.

**Anniversaries are such a common impetus for starting an archive that it was one of the case studies discussed at each table during the "15% Solutions for Foundation Archives Advancement" lunch session.**

**Here was the scenario:**

*The archives program at your foundation is new, and next year is the foundation's 50th anniversary. The communications department wants to incorporate stories from your foundation's history into promotional blog posts and materials. Currently, the archive simply contains boxes upon boxes of old records that have not yet been inventoried. How do you quickly apply order to this disorganization, so that you can make use of the history it contains?*

Examples for some of the solutions the various table groups came up with included the following:

**Table 1**

We decided to focus on quick wins — photos, high-value items, stories, perhaps even stories that everybody already knows. Start getting those out there to gain staff buy-in. And we also suggested that we get some oral historians on board to conduct interviews and capture even more stories.

**Table 2**

We called the Rockefeller Archive Center, they sent us a crackerjack archivist to come in and consult with us. The archivist helped us sort out our thoughts and put our ideas on paper. With her help, we were able to create a proposal to the **Leon Levy Foundation**, which is known for funding this kind of work in the nonprofit sphere.

**Table 3**

We decided to leverage existing knowledge to come up with a story that will satisfy the immediate need of the anniversary. Once that proves the value of the archive, the archives and records management functions should receive more funding.

Anniversaries planted the idea to start an archive for two of the presenters in the Getting It Done: Collaborative Case Studies Session as well. As Michael Walter from International House explained:

> ***Despite accumulating almost one hundred years' worth of documents, International House has never had a formal archive program. In 2018, we began to rectify this. We engaged the Winthrop Group to help us get a better understanding of our options and potential long-term management and access to records. There were multiple drivers for this partnership. First, our endangered historical records had reached a state of criticality. Quite simply, the House's records were and are falling apart. Second, International House celebrates its centennial in 2024. There's a familiar theme going on here. Without access to our archive, there's no way we could celebrate this centennial properly. We would lose opportunities for reflection, context, and innovation, some of the most exciting aspects of a centennial.***

Other foundation archives that began because of an anniversary on the horizon included:

- **Hogg Foundation for Mental Health** – Session presenter Elizabeth Stauber was hired as the Hogg Foundation's first archivist in 2015 as the foundation celebrated 75 years.
- **Simons Foundation** – Panelist Marion Greenup noted that as the foundation approached its 25th anniversary: "It seemed to me we had the opportunity to prospectively plan for how we were going to retain records and documents that were important to our science. Our foundation has a low-key approach to the foundation itself but not to its work, so the aim was not so much to tell the story of the foundation but to tell the story of the researchers we fund." With the foundation president as a champion, the Simons Foundation began to talk with senior program staff about what would be valuable to include and eventually launched a pilot project focused on archiving a major initiative.

Sometimes an anniversary can add a new element to an already established archive. Several presenters and panelists reported that oral history programs were developed or reinvigorated by anniversaries. Oral histories are a way to capture foundation stories that aren't easily recorded in documents that represent the day-to-day grantmaking work of the foundation.

- **Mastercard Foundation** – Justin Greenland Duke of the Mastercard Foundation and Eric Abrahamson of Vantage Point History developed an oral history project in response to the foundation's 10th anniversary.
- **Rockefeller Brothers Fund** – Hope Lyons said that the archive had begun doing oral histories around the 75th anniversary in 2015, with a focus on long-time board members and staff.

Oral history interviews with a CEO who is departing or trustee who is rotating off the board can document the "view from the top" perspective. Interviewing staff at any level of the organization who have witnessed tremendous change can be equally valuable. For example, Vicente Velasco, a Ford Foundation employee who had served in a variety of roles — including as a waiter in the private dining room — during his fifty years of service was set to retire. "We're doing an oral history of Vicente because he knows more truths that are more juicy, more interesting, than almost anyone else in the foundation, and wouldn't it be a shame to lose that," Hilary Pennington said. (Oral history resources provided on **page 24**.)

As Michael Walter mentioned earlier, there are often multiple reasons that point toward the need for an archive. In the case of International House, physical records were at risk, however, it is important to keep in mind that digital records are even more fragile than paper documents.

## RECORDS AT RISK

Records at risk of damage, destruction, and loss took center stage at different times during the meeting and surfaced different points of view. "Risk" as a word had different meaning for different archives stakeholders. To some, loss of the historical record was the primary risk. This definition of loss was voiced most often by historians and professionals at the archival institutions charged with preserving the narrative of philanthropic organizations. To others, public access to sensitive records was the primary risk. Records managers and information managers inside foundations presented this as a concern that often came from the very top of the organization.

It is easy to find examples of risk to digital records. One needs to look no further than ransomware attacks, hacked email accounts, and database breaches. Senior leadership or staff may turn to records managers and archivists for help when urgent concerns about security of digital records arise. This sudden scrutiny puts records management and records retention policies in the spotlight. This can be a good thing for archives. Records management is covered in greater detail in **Section 5**, but for now the key point is that records managers and archivists can turn conversations about digital risk into discussions about organization-wide policies that improve both data security and identification of archival records.

One of the questions Bob Clark, director of archives at the Rockefeller Archive Center, asked panel participants was how their perception of risk was impacted by whether the records were paper or digital. Immediately the stories turned to the risks in digital records and specifically in email. Robin Krause, the attorney with Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler recounted a case that involved legal review of email:

> ***I was recently working with an organization that gives a lot of grants to very active, political-leaning organizations, and one of their grantees is being investigated by a government agency. The foundation is not a target of the investigation but they're a grantor and they received an FBI subpoena for their grant files. We got their paper grant files, and they were what you would expect to see in a paper grant file. They had the original proposals and correspondence, the grant agreements, and then some reporting. And then we had to obtain their electronic email records for the grant. There were lots of emails that, because they were electronic, no one had printed them and put them in the grant file. I don't think they thought of them as part of the grant file, but they were producible under the subpoena. In the emails there were lots of conversations between the program officer and the grantee who is the target of this investigation.***

Email was one of the most-discussed individual record types at the meeting and for good reason. Every staff member has a foundation email account, and each person may send and receive hundreds of emails a week. Some of that email may contain decisions, actions, and debates that document the foundation's work, yet mixed in with those archive-worthy messages are spam emails, mailing lists, daily news, and other transient information.

One meeting attendee said her organization's policy was to maintain all email forever, yet it was also policy not to archive email in bulk but rather to ask employees to save those they thought had value to a folder outside the email system. This presents a risk not only that the organization's email going back years could be hacked but also means only a small portion of those emails will be preserved in an archive.

In response to Bob Clark's digital risk question, Hilary Pennington of the Ford Foundation said that for many program officers, their email was their filing system. They kept a lot of their grant files in folders in their email account. Then two years ago, after a lot of discussion, Ford decided to move to a one-year retention — meaning email is deleted from the email application (Outlook, Gmail, etc.) one year after it was sent or received.

> ***Each program officer had to think about what they're keeping in their email for the record and for the archive, enough to make sure they save it somewhere, because if they don't save it somewhere each year our system just empties out and deletes their email files. And that can be pretty freaky when you go to click that little folder where you saved everything about X and it's empty. It's a very challenging conversation, and we have done funny, witty, trainings for staff to try to help them understand this and to care about it and to pay attention. But it's an ongoing evergreen thing, and I don't think any of us probably have it exactly right.***

Speaking for maintaining the historical record, Angela White, philanthropic studies archivist at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis, advocated for keeping email as an important record category with value for future historians.

> ***It's scary for foundations and for other nonprofits to turn over their email for all of the reasons that we've heard, but without it the context is gone, and you can't really understand why decisions were made. Email is the most likely way that those discussions take place. It's really painful to me when I talk to an organization and explain the ways we can mitigate risk using redaction tools and still they say, 'we'll think about the email.' Please don't withhold the email. This is what historians want.***

The email conversation is an opportunity to talk to stakeholders about building an archiving program that takes sensitivities to risk into consideration while at the same time preserving the historical context about the foundation's work.

Digital records aren't the only records at risk in a foundation. As the transition to digital systems evolved, physical records have been relegated to boxes in closets, filing cabinets, offsite storage facilities, and even basements. Michael Walter and Sam Markham shared photos of the boxes they found in the basement of International House as they began the hunt for historical records. "They were disorganized, inaccessible, vulnerable to loss, and the vulnerability was actually something that was not hypothetical, it was real," Markham said. "There had been a flood right before the Winthrop project started that damaged a small group of records."

Anecdotal stories of records in basements popped up in the "Liberating Structures Lunch Session: 15% Solutions for Foundation Archives Advancement" as well. When Elizabeth Stauber was hired to start the Hogg Foundation Archives, she found "records hidden in the backs of filing cabinets, basements, closets, mysterious black holes that continue to pop up today." While not all these records may be at risk of physical destruction as the International House records were, they are useless to current and future foundation staff and to historians if they remain buried. Shining sunlight on those records can help mitigate the risk of damage and loss and give the foundation an opportunity to be more fully accountable for and engaged with its past.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

If foundation stakeholders manage risk by deliberating carefully about which records should be included in an archive, then taking the next step — to be accountable and transparent to internal and external stakeholders — will be less fraught. In his opening remarks, Darren Walker noted that “during a time of growing inequality and a time of growing cynicism about wealth and about even philanthropy, there is greater demand on us to be transparent in ways that we haven’t had to be in the past.”

Greater accountability and transparency can mean educating foundation staff about past work to improve the work they are doing today. This has been a focus of Stauber’s work at the Hogg Foundation:

> ***In order to do this [grantmaking] work honestly, we had to become a self-reflective organization that is transparent not only to the public but also to ourselves. What were we like as an organization fifty, sixty, and now coming up on eighty years ago? How have we evolved or changed, or have we changed at all? How do the projects, controversies, and successes from our history subtly influence the way that we operate today? It was time to understand and contextualize our history in order to make us better partners to our grantees and fellow Texas funders.***
>
> ***To promote the use of the newly established Hogg Foundation Archives and begin the work towards becoming a self-reflective organization, I began leading quarterly history lessons to our staff in 2017. My first lesson was on a program in the 1970s to bring mental health services to Zavala County at the same time as the rise of La Raza Unida, a Chicano nationalist organization that had prominence throughout Texas, California, and a few other southwestern states. Zavala County is located in south Texas, at the heart of a multi-million-dollar agri-business center where farmers grow crops such as spinach year-round. The agricultural economy brought in many laborers from Mexico, and over the decades this led to a majority population of Mexican American laborers and a minority population of White landowners. The main goal of La Raza Unida was to improve the economic, social, and political prospects of the majority Mexican American community that had historically been denied to them because of systemic reasons. Leaders in the party began applying for grants and attempting to bring jobs and social services to the neglected area. While La Raza Unida had political power in Zavala County, it was tenuous because they still did not have much economic power or broad influence throughout the state. The Zavala County Mental Health Outreach Program was largely considered a failure. The services we provided through it did not last long after the funding period ended. We were operating as outsiders, attempting to bring support to a community at war with each other. The program required community organizing, building trust, systemic change, and a long-term investment, none of which we were equipped to handle at the time. However, the challenges that arose during the program are challenges that we still face today as an organization and as a state: cultural competencies, addressing determinants of mental health — such as systemic racism and poverty — and community building. We must use our past failures and successes to***

> ***inform our approaches to these continuing challenges, or we will fall into the same traps as we did before.***

Hope Lyons of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund echoed Stauber's experience with making sure staff had access to the records they needed for the core business activity of grantmaking. "At the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, there is a deep family commitment to both recordkeeping and philanthropy, and transparency about those activities and the records are a key part of that."

Beyond meeting the needs of internal stakeholders, establishing an archive and providing a way for the public to access those records can demonstrate a foundation's willingness to be accountable for how it invests funds in social programs and communities. Foundations benefit from a tax-protected status, which means some of those grantmaking dollars that would ordinarily be part of federal and state revenues are instead controlled by a private foundation. Foundations are required to file tax returns that disclose grantee organizations and dollar amounts on an annual basis but, unlike the finance, insurance, or health care industries, foundations are not required to provide additional reporting about how effective those grants were in improving the lives of people in the communities they aim to serve. As Darren Walker, Ford Foundation President, said in his remarks:

> ***We remain the only sector in our society that does not have an external check on us. Yes, we have the IRS, and yes, we have regulations and our general counsel keeps us out of trouble, but I worked at a bank, I worked at a nonprofit. Every day there was an external pressure on me and the organizations I worked for to deliver for customers, clients, people living in Harlem who we were there to serve. Every day I felt that pressure. If we're to be honest with ourselves about philanthropy, we don't feel that pressure. We feel a different pressure. A passion to do justice in the world and to make a difference, and to cure and solve some of these seemingly intractable problems. But it really takes a lot of self-generated determination to be transparent, to monitor one's institutions, and to really take impact seriously. We can't take impact seriously if we don't take the preservation of our history seriously and if we're not willing to invest in it.***

Placing archival records in the hands of the public sends a clear signal that the foundation takes accountability and transparency seriously. It is a judgment day of sorts for any organization that opens its records to the public and asks: Did we make the best grants we could? Could we have done better? Did we have the impact we hoped we would? Luckily, there are consultants and archival repositories with knowledgeable staff who can help guide foundations as they build their archives and take the first steps toward opening them to the public.

## WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP

Many people at the meeting who were charged with developing an archive or a records management program emphasized their reliance on outside experts. Every foundation will need to develop its own mix of internal and external support for archives and records, but it may be useful to consider a few of the models represented by the presenters and panelists.

- **Internal records management staff and internal archives staff:** At the Gates Foundation most staff supporting the records management (Gates Foundation) and archive (Gates Archive) are employed directly by one of these two organizations.

- **Internal records management staff and external archives support:** the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund both have internal staff who support records management and archiving across their organization but work with the Rockefeller Archive Center to preserve their archives and provide access to records that will be made public.
- **External records management and external archives support:** Like many small foundations that are reluctant to add staff, the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation contracted with an archives consultant to establish a records management and archives program. After the foundation spends down, it expects to donate its records to an external repository to facilitate public access.

Archival repositories such as the Rockefeller Archive Center and the Philanthropy Archives of the Ruth Lilly Special Collections & Archives at IUPUI are excellent places to turn to for expert advice on how to proceed with an archiving or records management project. An external archival repository collects the records of other organizations, preserves them, and makes them available to researchers. (See **Section 7** for more on working with external repositories.) Archivists at these repositories are generous in sharing their expertise with organizations even if there is no formal donor relationship, as Stephanie Hislop, project manager at Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, found:

> ***The team at Rockefeller Archive Center has really helped to inspire us on our journey, in addition to giving us advice. Sometimes I just call them in when we need kind of a pep talk to get re-energized. This began in 2016 when the head of RAC came and spoke with our leadership to help them flesh out their goals and their vision for archives at MACP. And that went so well that at the end of that year, we asked the RAC team to come back and do a day-long session with our staff, where we invited representatives from different functional areas all across the building to come in and talk about archives.***

Many small to mid-size foundations seek out records management or archives consultants who work with existing staff to establish or refresh their programs. Professional associations can be a great resource for finding a consultant.

- **Society of American Archivists:** Directory of Archival Consultants (**www2.archivists.org/consultants**)
- **Association of Records Managers & Administrators** (now ARMA International): ARMA Buyer's Guide (**armabuyersguide.org**)

Another source of information and inspiration is networking with other archivists. Nicki Garces, archivist and records manager with the Consuelo Foundation, found mentors to be instrumental in building knowledge:

> ***The Association of Hawaii Archivists and the Society of American Archivists have been very supportive. I've been taking professional development courses and talking with people to find out best practices. I would also give a shout out to Jaimie Quaglino of the Gates Archive. She's been my mentor for over two years.***

In addition to the foundations noted in this report, many other foundations have archivists on staff and have well-developed archival programs. A little sleuthing can turn up one similar to yours in size or grantmaking focus with staff who may offer support. Foundation archivists and records managers are a small community, and everyone is eager to offer resources, share their own experience, or form a working group to solve a common problem.

In the forward of this report, Lori Eaton mentioned the hard-to-find *Establishing Foundation Archives* (1991) publication as a place she turned for support. This publication is now available in digital form on **IssueLab** (**www.issuelab.org**), a non-paywalled hosting site for research products published by social sector organizations around the world. Other places to look for published research include:

- **The Foundation Review** (**scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr**): Peer-reviewed journal of philanthropy, written by and for foundation staff and boards, and those who work implementing programs.
- **Center for Effective Philanthropy** (**cep.org**): Provides data, feedback, programs, and insights to help individual and institutional donors improve their effectiveness.

Whatever instigating event or issue arises for your foundation, seize the day. Start with a call to a local repository or a friendly foundation that already has a robust program established to collect archival materials. Gather advocates internally and begin crafting the case for building an archiving program. Once you have the buy-in you need, the next section provides guidance on how to approach records management and archives as integral parts of information management.

## Learn more about developing an oral history program

Columbia University, Columbia Center for Oral History Research
**www.ccohr.incite.columbia.edu**

Oral History Association
**www.oralhistory.org**

Oral History in the Digital Age
**ohda.matrix.msu.edu**

University of California, Berkeley Oral History Center
**www.lib.berkeley.edu/libraries/bancroft-library/oral-history-center**

University of Kentucky Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History
**libraries.uky.edu/libpage.php?lweb_id=11&llib_id=13**

# 5 Records Management and Archives

**A vast amount of information — data, web content, images, videos, documents, email — flows through a foundation's systems. Some of this information is structured data in content management systems, such as grants or financial data. Other types of data, such as files in shared drives and cloud storage, are unstructured. Some of this information is created by people employed by the foundation. Other information is created by people with relationships with the foundation, such as trustees or grantees. Still more information is created by people with no formal relationship to the foundation but is collected by foundation staff to help inform their work — books, journal articles, white papers, software code, data sets, images, audio recordings, and videos.**

The professionals who attended the Advancing Foundation Archives meeting all have a specific relationship with the kinds of information described above. Some are information managers, who sift and organize information so that current staff can learn from it. Some are records managers, who maintain control of the information created to support the work of the foundation. Others are grants managers, who focus on a specific subset of records typically stored as structured content in a grants management system. Then there are the archivists, who work with the records manager to preserve, describe, and provide access to information that documents the foundation history. Finally, there are the historians and other researchers, who study the records in public archives and interpret the information they contain in new ways.

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT

For the foundation's information to be useful as an archive to both present and future staff and to researchers, it must first be identified, categorized, and organized. This is the work of records managers. They have two main tools at their disposal: a records management policy and a retention schedule.

Several presenters at the AFA meeting shared their experiences starting or revisiting a records management program. Lori Eaton initiated a records policy and retention schedule at the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation:

> ***Developing a records management policy and retention schedule was an important first step in determining which records belonged in the archive. Through the records inventory process, we took the time to note who creates and collaborates on what kind of records, where the records are being saved, and whether they should be published to the website or preserved in perpetuity. Luckily, in many foundations there are natural dams in the landscape that are created during the ebb and flow of grantmaking. When a grant closes is a natural point to collect records for the archive. After a board meeting is another natural time on the calendar to push forward final documents to the archive.***

A records retention schedule identifies each type of record the foundation creates, from board minutes to personnel records to grant agreements, and defines how it is stored and managed over time. Federal and state regulations specify how long certain kinds of records must be kept and when they can be dispositioned (destroyed or archived). As Amy Gipson of the Gates Foundation said, legal counsel can be an important partner for a records management program:

> ***We just did a refresh this year, and I'm so happy to say that, after four years of working with our legal team, who owns our records management program, we have refreshed the policy to include preservation of records. This has been a lot of work and a great partnership between the archive and our legal team. We also refreshed our [records retention] schedule to list out every type of record that should also be transferred to the archive with disposition and guidance in that as well.***

Robin Krause reinforced the value of working with legal counsel when developing records policies and deciding on retention:

> ***As lawyers, so much of what we do with our clients is help them think about things like: What are the records you need to keep? What do you do when something happens with the records that you have? When should you and should you not be retaining versus destroying records? And then kind of falling into this landscape for the organizations we work with, which are large foundations, small foundations, public charities, all kinds of entities: How do you determine what is archival versus just a record? How do you help them think about what that process looks like?***

Hope Lyons of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund described how staff participate in the records management process:

> ***In terms of our approach to records management, as much as possible we make it so seamless that most people who are participants in the process don't know that they're doing it. They put this paper here, and then they upload the file there, and it's just***

> ***integrated into their day-to-day work. And for us, that's become an absolutely essential part of the process.***

Angela White of IUPUI had this advice for foundations when thinking about what records to keep:

> ***We like to joke that records managers always want to throw things away and archivists always want to keep everything. It's not true. Neither part of that is true, but I think it gets to the heart of the thing. There is a huge element of risk management and records management that I do have to think about as an archivist. Because of the way we get collections, we do have to play records manager a little more than we otherwise might because the institutions that we work with very rarely have records managers. It's amazing, every institution that I think I've ever worked with has piles and piles of bank statements and utility bills. You really don't need to keep those forever, I promise.***

Stanley Katz, a Princeton historian attending the meeting said this about limiting what records move through the records management program and into the archives:

> ***We really don't know what the interesting historical questions are going to be, and I would urge you, as you think about particular rules for record retention and so forth. It's mainly the retention I'm concerned about. We can fight about access down the line. But if you don't have it, it's not going to be available for use. There are ways to protect the usage of material, we all know that, but I think a lot more energy needs to go into thinking about history as a stakeholder in this process, that there are organizations and individuals who spend their lives doing this.***

Bob Clark of the Rockefeller Archive Center responded by saying:

> ***The reality is that records management and archives require choices. And archivists, and records managers, and lawyers, and leaders in organizations try to make the best-informed choice possible to create the most robust record while also taking into consideration that these are not dead-letter archives. I used to work at the Roosevelt Presidential Library. That was a dead-letter archive. There were no more Roosevelt records being created by Franklin and Eleanor; they were gone. But in foundations, [records] are constantly being created, and so it's constantly tacking back and forth, and re-evaluating your risk, what your goals are year to year.***

As the participants quoted above indicated, the records that foundations manage today come in digital form; they are born digital. While a retention schedule can and should be format agnostic in terms of what records will be kept, for how long, and how they should be dispositioned, managing born-digital records requires thinking through new processes that take into consideration both the unique characteristics of born-digital records and the systems where they are created and stored.

## DIGITAL ARCHIVES

Digital records can exist as multiple copies that are virtually identical. When a records retention schedule indicates that a copy of board minutes should be sent to the archive, it is simple enough to move a copy from the active board minutes folder in a shared drive or cloud storage folder to the digital archive folder within the same storage system. However, challenges arise when digital grant records must be exported from a content management system to save a copy for the archive. Many CMS applications don't provide a way to automate the export of specific data, and as a result, they require a more time-consuming manual approach. In addition, care must be taken to maintain the context between field data and uploaded files or links to files that point to storage locations in an external application. Another factor to keep in mind is that preserving digital records in a way that aspires to best practice standards requires more than simply copying files from an active folder to an archival folder. Digital preservation is covered at the end of this section, but three specific kinds of digital records inspired many conversations throughout the Advancing Foundation Archives meeting: email, grant records, and data sets.

Email is the new correspondence. Correspondence has been a core record group in archival collections since archivists first began collecting. Traditionally, correspondence includes letters, cards, memoranda, and notes, whether they be formal or informal, typewritten or handwritten. In organizations today, email stands in for all those things and more: calendar invites, subscription newsletters, solicitations from vendors, organization-wide broadcast emails, updates from social media accounts, order information, personal non-work-related messages, and the list goes on. Only a fraction of that might be considered a record of the organization, so what does that mean when the email account of a long-serving staff member is made available to the archive? While email as a record may hold an element of risk as explored in the previous section, email as correspondence remains a critical record group for the digital archives.

Marion Greenup, of the Simons Foundation, described a project management application where email-like messages are managed.

> ***We manage a lot of our programs using other platforms like Teamwork or Basecamp, and some of them quite extensively. We launched a program in 2006 to recruit families, who had only one child with a diagnosis of autism. We did extensive work, including the genetics, but the entire project, managed with thirteen sites in North America, was all managed on one platform. Most of the emails associated with any of the decision-making [for that project] were all done there.***

These "in-app" messages and their attachments contain critical documentary evidence that detail how the project was managed.

For individual staff members, knowing their email will be accessible to them indefinitely may be comforting but what happens when a staff member leaves? Many IT departments close accounts and can assign access to that account to incoming staff or to a supervisor. This provides limited access to the email, but if the email account had been transferred to the archive, it could have become accessible to staff across the foundation and possibly, at a later date, to researchers. The historians at the meeting advocated for archiving email because they value the context it provides to the other records in the collection.

One approach to archiving email is to ask staff to selectively save email messages that document a decision by exporting them from the email system and filing them with related records. At a minimum, many foundations ask program staff to upload grant-related email to the grants management system. Another approach, one used frequently by government agencies, is the capstone approach. This approach stipulates that the entire email account for staff in senior level positions be archived. In a foundation context, this might include the president/CEO and other executive level positions. The panelists and presenters did not delve into the processes and workflows that they use to archive emails.

Different email management systems provide different mechanisms for exporting messages. There are also tools that let archivists redact email that may contain personal information or are associated with specific senders. (See **page 32** for resources on email archiving.)

Grant records in archival collections are valued highly by researchers not only because they document the foundation's history of grant making, but also because they document the history of the hundreds or even thousands of nonprofits and individuals the foundation supported. In some cases, this may be the only historical footprint left by a particular organization or individual. In the past, those records were collected in paper grant files. Today, most foundations use a grants management system.

Both Phoebe Kowalewski and Lori Eaton mentioned working with grant records exported from Fluxx in their presentation. While grants management systems like Fluxx, SmartSimple, and Salesforce are frequently the system of record for active grants, to capture closed grant records for archiving means that both the information entered in data fields and any uploaded files must be exported in a way that maintains their relationship to one another. Few proprietary grants management systems have considered the need for archiving closed grants and therefore have not built in automated export options. Grants management system developers have little economic incentive to help subscribers export content and potentially move it to a different system. However, these vital records should not be trapped inside an application developed and controlled by an external organization.

During the meeting, side conversations about archiving grant records from grants management systems sparked a working group of archivists who later shared ad hoc workflows to export closed grants from Fluxx and lobbied Fluxx developers for an automated solution. More conversations among grants managers, IT staff, and archivists will be needed to highlight the importance of exporting grant records so they can be archived. Preserving closed grant records in a stable, nonproprietary system, will ensure they are as accessible as paper grant records to both staff and researchers. This will be an important discussion topic for future foundation archives meetings since best practices both for archiving and data security for grant records are a critical need.

Datasets are another type of record that foundations sometimes grapple with, particularly as many foundations require grantees to have a data management plan when a grant involves data collection. Like the National Science Foundation, private foundations expect grantees to deposit data sets in open access repositories. (See **page 32** for additional resources.) The topic of datasets sparked insights from several presenters:

Marion Greenup, Simons Foundation:

> ***At Simons, we have a real commitment to large datasets, it's our first love. And all of our grants come with terms and conditions that include data sharing and open access on some level. And for those datasets that we have declared a priority, we receive them, and we will host them, and we will create the right kind of access for them. We are learning as we go along, how to do this better, what kinds of issues there might be, but it's a big commitment to hosting, sharing, and protecting these very large datasets. And we talk about this all the time and worry about the risk associated with it.***

Nicki Lodico, Ford Foundation:

> ***We currently don't have a process for managing large datasets that are given to us by our grantees. This is something that I think we need to be talking with the [Rockefeller] Archive Center about as we're preparing to archive our digital files. What***

> ***are the opportunities for managing large datasets? And I think it's a question for all of philanthropy as well. What are our obligations for doing this and what is the value and power of having a large source of datasets across all of our different organizations?***

Bob Clark, Rockefeller Archive Center:

> ***[Datasets] present challenges that quite frankly are unsustainable from an archives perspective. Do we start to think outside the box and look for institutions that are doing that kind of work better and partner with them? Maybe a dataset from a foundation is hosted somewhere else, but because of the beauty of the twenty-first century, we can make connections to that location from the foundation record collections in our repository so that researchers can seamlessly be referred to that organization.***

Angela White, IUPUI:

> ***Being part of an academic institution here is a big benefit. We have a data librarian. She's not specifically for special collections, but she manages all the big datasets for grants that our researchers, particularly in public health, get. Making the datasets available is part of these agreements. We have ways of preserving this data and someone devoted to cleaning data and making it available in a useful format. So, you know, partnering with academic institutions that are research intensive is probably one way around this.***

As with digital grant records, data sets are another digital record that could be a topic taken up at a future foundation archives meeting.

## PRESERVATION OF DIGITAL ARCHIVAL RECORDS

In paper-based archival collections, records are preserved in acid-free folders and boxes in a secure, climate-controlled facility. Care is taken to remediate records that may have been damaged by moisture, exposure to light, or pests. Many experts believe that digital archival records are even more fragile than paper records. At the very least, records made up of 0s and 1s require a different kind of preservation environment than do paper records. Best practices in digital preservation have been developed and refined, and foundation archivists are stepping into these waters as well. "We're living in a world where so much is digital, the ability to archive it digitally is absolutely paramount to make sure that that history is accessible," Lyons said. "The push that the Rockefeller Archive Center has made around electronic archiving is a really key component of that."

The Rockefeller Archive Center has developed an open-source digital records transfer system called Aurora that allows it to receive copies of digital records directly from foundation donors and then move the records and metadata about them into its existing digital preservation and content management infrastructure, where the records can be preserved securely according to industry best practices and then described and made accessible for research.

There are cloud-based preservation applications available to foundations that want to manage digital preservation internally. Archivematica is a preservation management system developed as an open-source, community-supported application and is used by the Rockefeller Archive Center and by many college and university libraries with the technical staff to set up and support it.

Lori Eaton deployed a subscription-based solution to manage the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation's archive:

> ***In April 2019, we selected Preservica, a digital-preservation environment, to preserve our important digital records. The records can be stored in Preservica through spenddown, and Preservica can be set up to disposition accounts payable and other nonarchival records that we might be required to keep for a few years after spenddown. Most importantly, it can migrate file formats and prevent data loss for the files ingested to it today, through 2035, and beyond.***

A foundation's IT department can be a key ally in the file storage and digital systems landscape. As participants in one of the Liberating Structures Lunch scenarios suggested, establish a collaborative relationship with IT staff and/or consultants, educate them about archival records, and gain their assistance in planning for preservation. Before having a conversation with IT, consider getting educated about what digital preservation means in an archive setting. Colleen McDonough, archivist for the Kettering Foundation, turned to professional organizations for boosting her knowledge:

> ***We are looking into digital preservation, since we have an influx of that [born-digital archival records] coming our way, and we'll be facing more and more of that in the future. An important aspect has been training with digital archives, which means my assistant archivist and I have both taken DAS [Digital Archives Specialist] classes through SAA [Society of American Archivists].***

Courses like those offered by the Society of American Archivists and other organizations dedicated to digital preservation as well as books like Trevor Owens' *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation* can help foundation archivists be better prepared to advocate for the tools they need to preserve born-digital foundation records in the archives. (See **page 32** for digital preservation organizations.)

One thing that records managers and archivists can be sure of is that the systems and technologies used to create, manage, store, retrieve, and archive foundation records will change. For proof of that, consider the thumb drives and external storage disks gathering dust in office closets and desk drawers. As new technologies emerge, it will be important for information management professionals to communicate with one another both inside and outside the foundation to ensure that applications and solutions meet a variety of needs.

## More on email archiving

The Future of Email Archives: A Report from the Task Force on Technical Approaches for Email Archives. August 2018. Published by CLIR.
**www.clir.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/08/CLIR-pub175.pdf**

Email Archives: Building Capacity and Community. News about active grant projects focused on email archiving. Hosted by the University of Illinois.
**emailarchivesgrant.library.illinois.edu/blog**

Requirements for Archiving Email using PDF [draft report]. May 2020. Drafted by the Task Force on Technical Approaches to Email Archives, University of Illinois
**www.pdfa.org/requirements-for-archiving-email-using-pdf-draft-report-now-available-for-comment**

ePADD open-source software. 2010-2021. Developed by Stanford University libraries.
**library.stanford.edu/projects/epadd**

## Resources for data sets management

Information Sharing Approach. Gates Foundation
**www.gatesfoundation.org/about/policies-and-resources/information-sharing-approach**

re3data is a registry of research data repositories.
**www.re3data.org**

Zenodo is hosted by CERN to share and preserve research data.
**zenodo.org**

Dataverse is an open-source web application developed by Harvard to share and preserve research data.
**dataverse.harvard.edu**

Final NIH Policy for Data Management and Sharing. October 2020. National Institutes of Health
**grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-21-013.html**

NSF Data Management Plan Requirements. June 2020. National Science Foundation.
**www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp**

## Digital preservation organizations

National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA). A US-based consortium of organizations committed to long-term preservation of digital information. Hosted by the Digital Library Federation. Annual conference in November is called DigiPres.
**ndsa.org**

Digital Preservation Coalition. UK-based digital preservation community that promotes good practice and standards.
**www.dpconline.org**

# 6 Internal Access and Storytelling

**All the effort a foundation invests in managing records and building an archive is rewarded when staff turn to the archive to learn from the past. In Section 4, Elizabeth Stauber of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health described how she created narratives from archival records to help staff understand the past and to plan for effective future programs. Stauber also noted that archives "are not just passive receivers at the end of the information lifecycle." As a locus of institutional memory, an archive can inspire a culture of learning and grow through research and storytelling. But to build narratives based on archival records, staff must be able to find the records they need.**

## MAKING THE ARCHIVE USER FRIENDLY

A foundation's archive may hold records that describe a particular program in several different record groups. There might be a summary report in board meeting materials, documents in a grant file, and press releases about the program in communications. When brought together, these records provide rich context about a particular program. As Hope Lyons said about her early days at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund:

> *When I joined the RBF there was no shortage of records. There were tons of paper. The challenge that we found was our internal access to it and making sure those who needed to access it for our core business, which is grantmaking, were able to get to it easily.*

One way to help staff understand what records are in the archive is to create descriptive summaries, what archivists call finding aids. Marion Greenup at Simons Foundation reported that the foundation's archiving team is working toward "creating a very high-level archiving guide for our staff, and a way-finding document, some kind of finding guide, so they will know what's there." Finding aids can be narrative summaries that describe the records at the foundation level, the department level, and within a department at the program level. They can be detailed inventories that include the date or date range of the records, the number of files, what format they are in (paper, film, audio, digital files), who created them, and where they are located. These finding aids can be simple text documents or spreadsheets, or they may be more sophisticated databases or web-based catalogs, such as the Rockefeller Archive Center's DIMES (**dimes.rockarch.org**) online collection and catalog.

Applying consistent terminology when describing records in inventories and catalogs can make them even more findable. In digital systems, tagging or metadata can be employed to attach descriptive terms to grants, board minutes, videos, and photos. When consistent terminology is used, for example "health care," staff will be more likely to find all the records that are related to health care programs across all departments and record types. Some foundations may develop their own internal vocabulary – sometimes called a controlled vocabulary, a taxonomy, or a thesaurus. Others may use an industry standard such as the Philanthropy Classification System (PCS) (**taxonomy.candid.org**) developed by Candid. Elizabeth Stauber at the Hogg Foundation has begun to implement the PCS system:

> ***The Philanthropy Classification System, or PCS, is a taxonomy that describes the work of grant makers, recipient organizations, and the philanthropic transactions between those entities. Applying this schema to our grant records solved several problems: a need for better metadata, improved searchability of our grant records, and an organized means to share our knowledge in projects with those outside of the foundation. The PCS answers the following questions about philanthropy: who — the population served; what — the subject and organization type; how — support strategy and transaction type; and where — geographic area served. Prior to implementation, the Hogg Foundation collected information about the who, what, how, and where, but it was embedded in our narrative reports and budgets. Information cannot be easily extracted and discovered in this format and did not allow us to track our records long term to analyze trends. We were able to refine the PCS to suit our specific needs and develop a way to integrate the collection of this information into our grants-management system. This information is now collected throughout the entire grant process from application to award and has been retroactively applied to grant records going back ten years by the team. We hope eventually to apply this to all of our grant records, going all the way back to 1940. We're not there yet. We plan to leverage this information structure and data to improve the searchability of the archive database, provide more specialized access to our past and current grantees on our website, as well as sharing our current grants data with Candid through their e-reporting program.***

Phoebe Kowalewski, Atlantic Philanthropies archivist at Cornell University, has also seen the benefit of applying consistent vocabulary to describe records:

> ***Each grant on Atlantic Philanthropies' publicly available database has been tagged with controlled vocabularies. Using their own***

> *personalized taxonomy, Atlantic classified each grant by the issue it addressed and the predefined somewhat broad program area that it historically fell under, such as Higher Education or Peace and Reconciliation. They also employed [PCS], which provides more granularity in describing each grant. In order to ease the transition of research from website to archives, we have been using these vocabularies to tag grant files in the collection's finding aid.*

## LEARNING FROM THE ARCHIVE

Improving the findability of records in the archive will strengthen the ability of staff to build accurate narratives based on those records. That might mean informing a deeper understanding of programmatic history, as Hope Lyons describes at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund:

> *We are in the midst of doing some anticipated programmatic expansion. We are looking into doing some work in Latin America, where we had been active many years ago, though it has been quite a while. All the staff who had worked on it had left, and so we didn't have institutional memory. Thankfully, we had the [Rockefeller] Archive Center and we had Barb Shubinski [director of research and education at the Rockefeller Archive Center], who went back to our files and was able do a really great overview of our history and work in Latin America, which could then inform us as we're thinking about our next steps with our grantmaking.*

Or it might mean delving into the archive to help staff better understand donor intent and organizational history, as Stephanie Hislop and her colleagues have done at the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP) by generating books and presentations for staff use:

> *This focus on donor intent and documenting our history spawned a series of internal projects, some of which are called legacy projects internally, aimed at capturing and documenting not only our history but also our culture and these important organizational milestones. Note that all of these are internal documents, so they've been produced not to answer any external need but to support our own culture and knowledge of the organization. Our communications team produces several deliverables, including an annual highlights presentation for staff at the end of the year and a year-in-review book, which even though it just transitioned to being a quarterly digital publication, it seems a lot like a yearbook. So, it captures not just our grantmaking but also our organizational events, our culture; it has a history of all of the employees in it in the year. So, it's really a magical sort of book that we produce just for our own internal history.*

At the Gates Foundation, the organization turned to the archive to create a timeline for the Gates Foundation's 15th anniversary and shared it with staff. As Jaimie Quaglino recounts:

> *It was a really interesting experience because we made that timeline based on our holdings, and some people looked at it and thought, "Well, wait. What about this event or that event?" We let them know, "If we don't have*

> ***the records, we can't actually put it on the timeline." So, it became an interesting donor relations conversation, but ultimately, we now have this great record of the foundation's history that, as collections are added, we can augment it and continue to iterate on.***

As Quaglino's example demonstrates, using archival records to tell stories to internal stakeholders can both educate people about the organization's history and create an opportunity to build the archive as people recognize that they may be able to point to records that should be included. As you'll hear in the next section, foundations can extend their impact even further when they share their archive beyond their own organizational walls.

# 7 Public Access and Storytelling

**The obvious reason researchers might turn to foundation archives is to understand the history of philanthropy, but that is only the tip of the iceberg. Skim the Rockefeller Archive Center's storytelling platform Re:source (resource.rockarch.org) and you'll see researchers focused on a wide range of topics — public health, social justice, the environment, arts and culture, and the list goes on.**

As James Allen Smith said in his 1991 essay in *Establishing Foundation Archives*, "foundations often house material that is exceedingly important for understanding the nation's social history, intellectual developments in various academic fields, as well as the genesis of many important public policy initiatives." John Craig expanded on this point in his 2012 white paper: "In the hands of good researchers, the records of foundations can provide guidance for future generations in tackling new and continuing social problems."

In short, what a foundation learned through its grantmaking can have exponential impact when a researcher combines it with what other foundations with a similar focus learned. Researchers can analyze data and records from multiple sources and present what they found in a way that educates the public and informs future decision making. Making the leap from an internal archive to sharing records with the public may seem daunting, but there are experts available to help.

## ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES

Archival records are managed by many different types of institutions. Colleges and universities often collect archival material in a special collections library that houses manuscripts, papers of individuals, and records of organizations. The Ruth Lilly Special Collections & Archives at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) has a particular focus on records that document the history of the philanthropic tradition, and their collections support student researchers at IUPUI's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. Angela White, Philanthropic Studies archivist at IUPUI, described her interactions with both donors and researchers:

> ***I spend a lot of time with potential collection donors, with current collection donors, helping them to understand why they might want to preserve their history and what use they can get out of it once they have decided to preserve that history.***
>
> ***I have three main categories of external researchers. People who are interested in a particular foundation; some of that is internal around anniversaries, but there are a lot of people who come through the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy who are interested in doing a deep dive into a particular one. There are researchers who are interested in mainly grantees, so the actual foundation interest is sort of adjacent. And then we have researchers who are interested in data sets of multiple foundations.***

A foundation may want to select a college or university library that collects records on a topic that reflects the foundation's grantmaking focus or in the same city or state. The latter may be an especially appropriate choice for a community foundation that makes gifts to local organizations. By choosing a local college or university library, the records of both the foundation and its grantees remain in the community. If the foundation was created by an individual with close ties to his or her alma mater, that college or university library may be designated as the repository of the foundation's records. The Atlantic Philanthropies were donated to Cornell University Special Collections in part because its founder, Chuck Feeney, was an alumnus.

Other institutions that collect and preserve archival collections include public libraries, historical societies, and cultural institutions. The Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), one of the meeting's organizers, is unique in that it is an independent operating foundation established to serve as a public archival repository for the records of philanthropy. Bob Clark, director of archives at RAC, recounted how his institution evolved:

> ***We were originally founded in 1974 by the Rockefeller family and several Rockefeller-founded organizations: the Rockefeller Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and Rockefeller University. Over the succeeding decades, though, our collections have vastly grown in scope to include such representative organizations as the Ford Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the Luce Foundation, Social Science Research Council, Russell Sage, the Commonwealth Fund, and many more. In addition to gathering and preserving philanthropic records, we also make them accessible to public research. We host around four hundred onsite researchers per year and respond to over two thousand email inquiries per year, and we have an innovative research and education team led by my colleague and friend, Barb Shubinski, that assists foundations in leveraging their history. And we***

> ***also are using innovative new technologies to make sure the stories of philanthropy get out to the broader public.***

Talking with other foundations that have a similar grantmaking or geographic focus is one way to begin building a list of potential repositories. Consider local colleges and universities, regional historical societies, or large public libraries. Once you have a list, you will want to have a conversation with each repository about whether they will be a good fit for the foundation's records. Some repositories may decide that philanthropic records are not within the scope of records they typically collect. Though Cornell Libraries doesn't have a specific focus on philanthropic records, as mentioned earlier, it is interested in the records of the university's alumni. In her presentation, Phoebe Kowalewski, Atlantic Philanthropies archivist, described how the foundation's records found a home at Cornell:

> ***In the case of Atlantic Philanthropies, initial discussions began two years prior to the first shipment of records to the archives. Cornell's proposal for project-planning funding was submitted and approved in 2014. In January 2015, an archives consultant was hired by Cornell to survey records, both paper and electronic, at the New York, Bermuda, Belfast, and London offices. As a result, she drafted an in-depth processing plan, and so by September 2015, Cornell was awarded the grant to house, process, and promote Atlantic's archives. In 2016, a deed of gift was drawn up and signed by Atlantic and Cornell staff. In addition to providing the transfer of title, the deed of gift also outlined the physical transfer of the collection as well as listed types of records to be excluded, included, or restricted. It is important to remember that even though an archive receives your materials, it does not mean it will make those materials immediately available to researchers. The deed of gift also established the Archives Advisory Committee in order to continue the dialogue between Cornell and Atlantic, and we meet up with them twice a month, now we're down to once a month, and we have in-person meetings once a year, so close, close communication.***

The agreement Kowalewski mentioned above is a donor agreement, which transfers title and other rights to the archival repository. Some foundations prefer to sign a deposit agreement, which transfers physical or digital records into the care of the repository but does not transfer title. Either type of agreement can incorporate embargo periods that restrict access to certain record groups for a specific period of time. As Kowalewski also noted, it costs money to process and describe, permanently store and preserve, and provide public access to the foundation's records. Many foundations support the archival institution with a one-time grant or series of grants that cover the costs of archival services and long-term storage.

There are several reasons a foundation may choose to place their archival records in the care of an archival repository. Mediating public access to those records once any restrictions have expired may be primary. Libraries like Cornell and IUPUI and repositories like the Rockefeller Archive Center not only field enquiries and facilitate research by helping researchers find primary sources to support their work, but they also promote the collections in their archives to the public so researchers will know the foundation's records are available for study. These institutions have reading rooms where researchers can come to view physical records and have professional archivists and reference staff who are knowledgeable about all the records in their collections and can help researchers zero in on exactly what records they would like to view.

Hilary Pennington related how the demand for information about the Ford Foundation's history began to overwhelm staff:

> *The values of our foundation have always been open, accessible, and available for history, as you heard Darren just say. We had a policy, starting in the 1970s, to allow the, quote, "freest possible access to and use of Foundation information without infringing on the rights of the person who created that information or hampering the current work of the Foundation." What we found was that we couldn't manage the degree of interest. There were so many researchers coming from outside the foundation that there came to be about a one-year waiting list for them just to have access to what they wanted, and we weren't adequately staffed to fulfill that. So, in 2011, we made the decision to move our archive to RAC, which is a great decision. I think that that has been very, very good for external researchers and it's part of this family of collections that I think, from a research point of view, will probably make it so much easier to look at what we do, together with the work the Rockefeller Foundation or RBF [Rockefeller Brothers Fund] does.*

Another key reason to place records in the care of a professionally managed and staffed repository relates to storage. Most repositories store record collections in secure vaults with climate control systems that are optimized based on the format of the records. For example, film and photographic negatives require different storage conditions than paper records. Records are monitored for preservation issues and any damage is remediated or repaired to ensure the long-term use of the records. Repositories also preserve digital records according to best practices, which goes far beyond folders in a shared drive or in cloud storage. (See Section 5 for more on digital preservation.)

## DIGITAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC ARCHIVES

It hasn't always been easy for researchers to find foundation records, but that has changed thanks to technology. Now most collecting institutions describe their collection on websites and feature them in blogs or online exhibits. Aggregated library catalogs include entries for archival collections alongside books and journals, making them easier for students doing research to discover. Often an Internet search can return results for archival collections that are publicly accessible on the web. As Bob Clark noted:

> *Web access is creating opportunities for broader access, so it's not just whether you can afford to come to the Archive Center or to Indiana to research, that in and of itself is limiting your ability to do research. Even if you're sitting on your couch in Beijing you can have the same research experience as if you were coming to [the Rockefeller Archive Center in] Westchester County or to [the Lilly Library at IUPUI in] Indiana.*

These online finding aids allow researchers to narrow their search based on how the records are described. Researchers can request that a physical document be digitized, and a copy sent electronically. For certain records, such as photographs or documents that are in the public domain, users may be able to download copies directly from the repository website.

As with any technology, understanding how to use it has a learning curve. Eric Abrahamson, historian with Vantage Point History, voiced his concerns:

> *One of the things that we're finding as archives move into the digital sphere is the challenge of building the kind of narrative that Hilary Pennington talked about. All your collecting really, the whole point of most of it, is to be able to generate narrative and storytelling. One of the things we're discovering is that in the digital world there is obviously an ocean of information compared to what existed in the past. It's very granular. It's much less synthesized than it was in the past. I'm not sure historians are being trained to make the transition. I think lawyers are being trained how to work with this information, but I don't think historians are being trained about how to work with digital archives.*

In response, Bob Clark described the approach the Rockefeller Archive Center is taking:

> *What we try to do, as we're organizing digital records, is kind of bring you back to that aggregate level with descriptive work that can enhance your research process, so that as a researcher, you can get to know the records and know the terminologies well enough to help guide your research through these granular records.*

Organizations focused on enhancing knowledge in the social sector are also collecting and organizing archival records across multiple organizations and making them available in one place. IssueLab (**www.issuelab.org**) by Candid, is one of these. This aggregated collection of foundation reports, impact studies, and datasets can be searched on several facets such as program area, geographic location, publication date, document type, and more. Lisa Brooks, IssueLab's co-founder, described the repository in more detail:

> *An institutional repository is a searchable collection of digital objects, so you can think of anything from an image file to a video or an audio file, on out to the kinds of publications that you probably funded — research studies, evaluations, this kind of thing. Users can access details about these objects, so there's some metadata describing the object, making sure that they understand what it is they're about to grab. Users can access the complete objects, and the collection is accessible to anyone at any time.*

When a foundation sends a report to IssueLab for public access, IssueLab distributes those documents beyond its own website to a network that includes WorldCat, the world's largest library catalog. This wider distribution network means more historians and researchers will be able to find publicly available foundation reports, extending the impact of grant-funded research even further.

## EXTERNAL STORYTELLING

A well-managed archive can be a tremendous asset when it comes time to tell the foundation's story. Some foundations publish books or host exhibits in public spaces. Others mount virtual exhibits, publications, and special websites. The Commonwealth Fund's Centennial website (**centennial.commonwealthfund.org**), for example, relies on the foundation's professionally managed archive to share the foundation's history online. Internal staff at the Fund turned to their archive, which had been donated to the Rockefeller Archive Center, and with the assistance of the RAC's Research and Education team, it uncovered the facts, photos, and other historical information that made this engaging website possible.

The Rockefeller Brothers Fund also built out a web-based timeline (**www.rbf.org/about/about-us/timeline**) that illustrates their history. Hope Lyons described how that came about:

> ***We have a platform that's kind of a website off of our website, if you will, that's focused exclusively on our history. It's a timeline that we worked with the [Rockefeller] Archive Center to develop.***

The Simons Foundation also used its website as a platform to host a unique collection of video interviews that captures the lives of scientists in their own words. Marion Greenup explained the project this way:

> ***We have an interest in the history of mathematics, for example, and a lot of very famous mathematicians are no longer [with us]. So, we've started a process, others have done it too, of doing very long, unstructured interviews to try to record this history. We then started trying to figure out how to present that in smaller bits and bytes and sessions.***

The long, unstructured interviews were edited and divided into video chapters that were then published as a virtual exhibit on the Simons Foundation's website as Science Lives (**www.simonsfoundation.org/series/science-lives**), a series of extended interviews with some of the giants of 20th-century mathematics and science.

Whatever form the story takes, project managers will need to build relationships within the foundation to ensure that leadership is on board with how the story will be told, both in terms of the medium to be used and the elements that will be included. Presenters during the "Collaborative Case Studies" session reflected on how they laid the groundwork for developing the story they wanted to tell, setting parameters and expectations. For example, Michael Walter at International House described internal conversations about how to share the organization's story publicly.

> ***We've also had a lot of conversations about how we can bring the archives out of that room and create exhibitions around them. There have been a lot of conversations about how we can leverage these archives, and we're very fortunate to be able to house them at the House.***

Eric Abrahamson of Vantage Point History talked about how important it is to help leadership see the benefit of telling a balanced story:

> ***As storytellers and as historians who are often writing history that's sponsored, we often hear the concern, "Well, you're just writing what they want you to say." We work very hard not to do that, and one of the things that we work hard to do is to persuade executives that a complex story is better for their organization than a simple story of triumph, that failure is often more instructive than success, and that you can tell very difficult stories if you treat everybody with respect, allow different perspectives, and don't throw people under the bus. Most of the time you can tell a story that honors people in the process, even though there are winners and losers. And we find that most of the time if we work that through with the executives, we are able to tell what I think are remarkably candid stories.***

Regardless of what shape the narrative takes, the stories foundations have to tell about their grantees, their impact, and themselves are an important part of social history. Foundations and the work they support have an impact on communities in so many ways. Everyone has experienced the power of story. When a foundation shares its work through storytelling, it is educating the public in a way that resonates.

# 8 Closing Remarks

**The Advancing Foundation Archives conference concluded with two capstone speakers: Jack Meyers, president of the Rockefeller Archive Center and Nicki Lodico, director of information management for the Ford Foundation.**

## CLOSING REMARKS OF JACK MEYERS

I was reflecting on the difference between the problems we face now and those faced by attendees at the conference thirty years ago. At that time, the organizers faced a real challenge. Foundations are not organizations that naturally think historically, and I think this is partially because of the kind of things Darren was talking about this morning, that the very things that give foundations their freedom, the lack of paying customers for example, are the things that inhibit that. Think about it for a minute. No corporation could stay in business if it didn't think historically, if it kept making the same mistakes over and over again without learning from them. And no nonprofit could continue to exist if it kept making the same mistakes over and over again. Donors would simply stop giving money or audiences would stop coming to events. Foundations, on the other hand, can make the same mistakes year after year, decade after decade, and still be just fine, as long as they have a good investment manager. There is no internal imperative to think historically in foundations. This was a major challenge for the first people who began to try to talk to foundations about their archives — they were telling them that there were things that could, in fact, be learned from their past, whether these things were mistakes or successes. And foundations weren't exactly sure why this was important for their current work.

The other challenge came from the historians, who had to be convinced that there was something valuable in foundation archives. Not a lot of people showed up at the [Rockefeller] Archive Center in the first decade or so of its existence. It took researchers some time to understand that, in addition to information about the foundations themselves, foundation archives contained rich historical material about organizations and people from all over the world.

These were the things that the first conference thirty years ago really tried to tackle. To make the case to both sides that archives had value to foundations and that historians could learn from those archives.

What I found fascinating about today's meeting is that we've taken it as a given that these archives are valuable historically. There hasn't been a lot of discussion about that, and that's a real sign of progress, I think. So, I want to thank everybody for today. Both the organizers and all of you for taking the time out of the press of immediate business to come here and spend a whole day thinking together about the field's new issues. As Darren said, I hope it's not another thirty years until we do this again.

Of course, there are still a lot of challenges out there. Many of the challenges come from two words that didn't even appear in the report 30 years ago. I looked back and the words "digital records" are nowhere to be found in the proceedings in 1990. But they present huge new challenges, both for your organizations and for those of us who are involved in running an archive for researchers. The issues mentioned today about how to give context to all this stuff that institutions are producing, and whether that context comes from new kinds of finding aids, or oral histories or linkages to other kinds of information will be a major challenge for all of us to unwind in the coming years.

There aren't simple answers to any of this. If there were, we could have sent you all an informational booklet, and we wouldn't have had this conference. The issues are something that as a community we really need to discuss together in order to move toward solutions — probably not a single solution but many solutions that will, themselves, inevitably evolve over time. But that's the value of ongoing discussions.

## CLOSING REMARKS OF NICKI LODICO

I just have a few things to add, and one is that I have had the great good fortune of working with Jack and his team since 2011. Wow, it's been quite a journey and it has been an amazing learning experience and an amazing partnership. I can't say that I've ever had a better partnership with another colleague organization. It's really been fantastic. Many of you in this room know that the Ford Foundation has been very happy to share what we've learned the hard way, and I invite you all to continue to be in contact because that's something that we're very willing to do and feel that we're obligated to do for the sector, and we take that very seriously.

I just want to share a few soundbites from today. First, "You want to keep records that tell your story but doing this isn't without risk." "Unfortunately, risk is an ever-changing landscape." That one terrifies me slightly. "Be flexible." We heard that, I think, in just about everyone's presentation. "Email has caused major disruptions in how we record our work." I think we all feel that universally. "We need to start paying attention to datasets," which is an emerging key challenge for records managers and archivists, and I don't know that anyone has any answers, but academia may be able to teach us a bit about what they know. "Oral history presents an enormous opportunity to record an organization's history." We're learning that now. We're working with Eric and his team. We've recently gone through the opening of oral histories that were recorded in the 1970s and wow, some of them were really "wow." But worth the wait. And then, "Partnership." Great work is happening in the sector, and I think we should continue to support each other and to champion this work.

And lastly, I want to say that Darren Walker does not say what he doesn't mean. So, I'm going to take him up on his gracious offer this morning of sponsoring a continued discussion about archives and records and philanthropy, and I hope to see you all at our next meeting.

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To build a complete and nuanced picture of the history of philanthropy, the archival record must capture the history of foundations large and small and record the work of grantees in all sectors of society and across the globe. Publications like this one, as well as the recorded presentations available on YouTube, can provide support for new and growing foundation archives. But there is more work ahead. The ever-changing nature of how, where, and in what form foundations create and store records will require continued collaboration among archivists, records managers, legal experts, and other legal professionals.

## APPENDIX A

# Speakers, Panels, and Presenters

### OPENING REMARKS

– **Nicolette Lodico** Director of Information Management, Ford Foundation
– **Darren Walker** President, Ford Foundation

*Link to YouTube to view complete opening remarks:* **youtu.be/TXDRXWDwZzs**

### SESSION 1: "Successful Communication to Stakeholders"

– **Bob Clark (moderator)** Director of Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center
– **Hilary Pennington** Executive Vice President of Programs, Ford Foundation
– **Marion Greenup** Vice President of Administration, Simons Foundation
– **Hope Lyons** Director of Program Management, Rockefeller Brothers Fund
– **Robin Krause** Partner, Patterson, Belknap, Webb and Tyler
– **Angela White** Philanthropic Studies Archivist, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

*Link to YouTube to view the full panel discussion:* **youtu.be/udRMpJoTlpU**

### SESSION 2: "A Snapshot of Information Management Across Philanthropy"

– **Haian Abdirahman (moderator)** Archivist, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
– **Elizabeth Stauber** Archivist and Records Manager, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health (Texas), "Creating a Culture of Transparency through the Archives"
– **Collette N. McDonough** Archivist, Kettering Foundation (Ohio), "A Snapshot of Information Management at the Kettering Foundation"
– **Nicolita "Nicki" Garces** Information Management Officer, Consuelo Foundation (Hawai'i), "Paddling Forward Through a Sea of Nonprofit Realities: How One Small Hawai'i Foundation Manages Information"
– **Stephanie Hislop** Project Manager, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (Minnesota), "Archives Planning for Beginners: How to Begin Before You're Ready to Get Started
– **Lisa Brooks** Director of Knowledge Management Systems, Candid (Illinois), "Institutional Foundation Repositories: The Key to Mobilizing Your Knowledge
– **Lori Eaton** Archivist, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (Michigan) and **Phoebe Kowalewski**, Atlantic Philanthropies Project Archivist, Cornell University (New York), "Archiving Forward and Backward: Two Perspectives on Capturing the Impact of Limited-life Foundations"

*Link to YouTube to view the full panel discussion:* **youtu.be/zHQUk0qX88k**

## LIBERATING STRUCTURES LUNCH SESSION: "15% Solutions for Foundation Archives Advancement"

– Facilitated by **Elizabeth Stauber** Archivist and Records Manager, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

*Link to YouTube to view the full session:* **youtu.be/aBle20aC3VY**

## SESSION 4: Getting It Done: Collaborative Case Studies

– **Andrea Donohue (moderator)** Senior Manager, Global Records and Archives, Ford Foundation

– **Amy Gipson** Senior program manager of archives, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with **Jaimie Quaglino**, manager of archives services, Gates Archive

– **Justine Greenland Duke** Associate director of knowledge management, MasterCard Foundation with **Eric Abrahamson**, principal historian, Vantage Point History

– **Michael Walter** Special assistant to the president, International House with **Sam Markham**, director, Winthrop Group

*Link to YouTube to view the full panel discussion:* **youtu.be/s9-O491Pqs4**

## CLOSING REMARKS

– **Jack Meyers** President, Rockefeller Archive Center

– **Nicolette Lodico** Director of Information Management, Ford Foundation

*Link to YouTube to view full remarks:* **youtu.be/rSxBaK2_ups**

## APPENDIX B

# Resources for Further Exploration


Craig, J.D. (2012). The Archives of U.S. Foundations: An Endangered Species, The Commonwealth Fund. Access link: **https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/other-publication/2012/dec/archives-us-foundations-endangered-species**

Eaton, L., & Kowalewski, P. (2020). Archiving Forward and Backward: Two Perspectives on Capturing the Impact of Limited-Life Foundations. The Foundation Review, 12(1). Access link: **https://doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.1508**

Owens, T. (2018). The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation. John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, Maryland.

Rose, K.W. & Stapleton, D.H. (1991). Establishing Foundation Archives: A Reader Guide and First Steps. Council on Foundations: Washington D.C. Now available on IssueLab **https://www.issuelab.org/resource/establishing-foundation-archives-a-reader-and-guide-to-first-steps.html**

Taskforce on Technical Approaches for Email Archives. (2018). The Future of Email Archives. Council on Library and Information Resources. Access link: **https://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub175/**