

# SPEC Survey on Records Management

## 1. Introduction

Records management is the field of management responsible for efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of the records of a business or organization. There are two reasons for retaining non-current records. First is to satisfy the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of the organization for specific periods of time; second is to permanently retain those records which document the history of the institution. The benefits of a records management program include:

- Systematic segregation of records that have significant legal or operational value from those that have permanent value to the institution.
- Reduction in duplicated efforts from one administrative unit of the organization to another.
- Alleviation of storage space problems throughout the organization.
- Protection of personal information contained in the records.
- Efficient retrieval of records.
- Proper disposal of outdated records.
- Saving money (according to a 1997 estimate by the National Archives of Records Administration, records kept in storage cost \$21.61 less per cubic foot than records kept in office space.)

Not all academic or research institutions have a records management program. In those that do, administration of the program may be the responsibility of staff in an archives department, a special collections department or library, a remote shelving facility, or some other unit. There has, as yet, been no inquiry into the state of records management in ARL member institutions. We don't know how many ARL libraries are responsible for an institutional records management program, what models they follow, what practices they follow, or who pays for records management.

This survey seeks to answer the questions:

How widespread is the practice of placing records management in the library rather than somewhere else in the institution?

Where is records management placed in the administrative structure of the library?

What staff administer the records management program?

Are records physically housed within the library or elsewhere?

What are the common records management practices in ARL libraries?

What services are offered to institution clientele?

How many records are typically accessioned in a year?

Who pays the bills for records management?

This survey was designed by Clark E. Center, Jr., Curator, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama.

Please complete this survey and send the requested documentation by February 25, 2008. If you are not able to complete the survey in one sitting, you may return to the survey and resume where you left off. NB: You will need to use the same computer and Web browser each time you access the survey.

An \* indicates a required response.

As always, individual responses to the survey will be treated confidentially.

Questions can be directed to the [SPEC survey staff](#).

# SPEC Survey on Records Management

\* Select your institution:

\* Please provide the following contact information:

Name:

Job title:

e-mail:

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## 2. Background

Does your institution have a records management program?

Yes

It used to have a program, but it no longer does

No, Please click the Next>> button below to submit the survey now.

In which year did the records management program begin?

Year:

If there used to be a program but it has ceased, enter the year in which it ended, then click the Next>> button below to submit the survey.

Year:

Which unit in your institution is responsible for administering the records management program?

Archives unit that is not part of the library system

Archives unit that is part of the library system but not part of the Special Collections library or department

Special Collections library or department

Library storage facility

Other unit/department

Records management is contracted to an external vendor

If another unit/department administers the program, please list it below.

If records management is contracted to an external vendor, please name the vendor.

About what percentage of the departments in your institution participate in the records management program?

Enter a whole   
number:

If records management at your institution is the responsibility of a library unit, please complete the survey. Otherwise, click the box below, then click the Next>> button to submit the survey now.

Not the responsibility of a library unit

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## 3. Staffing

Please indicate the title(s) of the staff in the library unit identified above who have responsibility for the records management program, the number of staff (individuals) in each category (enter a whole number), and an estimate of the percentage of their time that is spent on records management activities (enter a whole number, e.g., 100, 50, 10). (Do not include the staff in the originating departments who are responsible for selecting and transferring appropriate documents to the program administrator.)

### Professional records manager

Position title:

Number of individuals:

Percentage of time:

If there is not a professional records manager,

[€ click here.](#)

### Other professional staff

Position title:

Number of individuals:

Percentage of time:

If there is not other professional staff,

[€ click here.](#)

### Support staff

Position title:

Number of individuals:

Percentage of time:

If there is not support staff,

[€ click here.](#)

### Student assistants

Position title:

Number of individuals:

Percentage of time:

If there are not student assistants,

[€ click here.](#)

### Other staff

Please describe other staff category:

Position title:

Number of individuals:

Percentage of time:

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If there is not other staff,

€ [click here](#).

Please identify the title of the position to which the records manager/records management program reports.

Title:

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## 4. Budget

Is there a separate budget designated for the records management program?

- Yes, there it has a separate, designated budget
- No, it is covered by a general operating budget

If yes, is it part of the administering unit's budget, part of the broader institution's budget, or part of both budgets?

- Part of the administering unit's budget
- Part of the broader institution's budget
- Part of both budgets

Comments:

Are the costs of the records management program covered totally by the budget or are there also charges for services?

- Costs are covered totally by the budget
- There are also charges for services
- Other, please explain

If there are charges for services, please briefly describe them. If there is a document that more completely describes the charges, please submit it in the Call for Documents at the end of the survey.

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## 5. Records Management Services

What types of records does the program manage? Check all that apply.

- Text (eye-readable)
- Graphic materials (eye-readable pictures, drawings, maps, photographs, architectural plans, etc.)
- Audio-visual materials (sound recordings, film, etc.; requires a device other than a computer to access)
- Electronic records (medium that requires a computer to access)
- Other format, please describe

Who provides the records management services listed below? Check all that apply.

	RM Program staff	Other	Not offered
Prepares records retention schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepares policy and procedure documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trains originating department staff in proper records management procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picks up materials from originating department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepares content lists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stores text records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stores graphic materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stores audio-visual materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stores electronic records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stores other record formats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Answers reference questions from records in storage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retrieves records from storage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivers retrieved records to originating department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discards records at the end of their retention period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Destroys records at the end of their retention period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transfers permanent records to archives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Converts permanent records to preservation format	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refreshes the format of permanent records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other service(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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If someone other than records management staff provides a service above, please describe who that is along with the service they provide.

If you checked "Other service(s)" above, please describe the service(s) and who provides it.

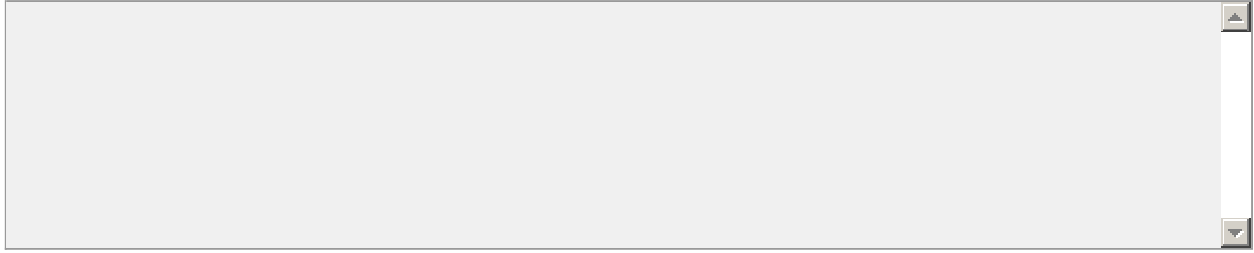
At what level and by whom are content lists made? Check all that apply.

	Originating Department Staff	RM Program Staff
Item	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Folder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Box	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe the other level.

## 6. Policy Decisions

Please briefly describe who is responsible/involved in making policy decisions such as approving records retention schedules, who may use records, how records are discarded or destroyed, etc.



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## 7. Records Storage

Where are physical records stored?

Where are electronic records stored?

How many records are currently in storage? For each format below please list the number of items and unit of measure (e.g., items, cubic feet, bytes, boxes, etc.).

Text

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Graphic materials

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Audio-visual materials

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Electronic records

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Other format

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Comments:



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## 8. Records Management System

How are accessions, inventories, check outs, etc. managed?

- Paper-based system
- Electronic management system
- Both paper and electronic systems are used

If an electronic management system is used, is it a homegrown or commercial system?

- Homegrown system
- Commercial system. Please identify the vendor and product.

Comments:

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## 9. Incoming Records

On average, how many new records are received each year? For each format below please list the number of items and unit of measurement (e.g., items, cubic feet, bytes, boxes, etc.).

Text

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Graphic materials

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Audio-visual materials

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Electronic records

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Other format

Number:

Unit of measurement:

Comments:

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## 10. Records Use

Who is permitted to request retrieval of records from storage for use/viewing? Check all that apply.

- Staff in the originating office
- Staff in other offices of the institution
- The general public
- Other, please specify

At what level are the records normally checked out? Check all that apply.

- Item
- Folder
- Box
- Other, please explain

On average, how many checkout requests are processed each year?

Requests:

Are records required to be used onsite?

- Yes
- No

Comments:

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## 11. Disposal/Destruction of Records

Are records discarded or destroyed at the end of their retention period? Check all that apply

Discarded Destroyed

Text

Graphic materials

Audio-visual materials

Electronic records

Other format

Please describe other format

If you discard records, how do you discard them?

If you destroy records, how do you destroy them?

On average, how many records are discarded and/or destroyed each year? For each format below please list the number of items and unit of measurement (e.g., items, cubic feet, bytes, boxes, etc.).

Text

Number discarded:

Number destroyed:

Unit of measurement:

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## Graphic materials

Number

discarded:

Number

destroyed:

Unit of

measurement:

## Audio-visual materials

Number

discarded:

Number

destroyed:

Unit of

measurement:

## Electronic records

Number

discarded:

Number

destroyed:

Unit of

measurement:

## Other format

Number

discarded:

Number

destroyed:

Unit of

measurement:

Comments:

## 12. Staff Training

How is staff trained in records management policies and procedures? Check all that apply.

- Formal classes
- Webinars
- In-person workshops
- On-the-job experience
- Self-study of manuals, etc
- Other, please explain

Are all staff members trained to manage all formats of records?

- Yes
- No

If no, please explain which staff are trained to manage which type(s) of record(s).

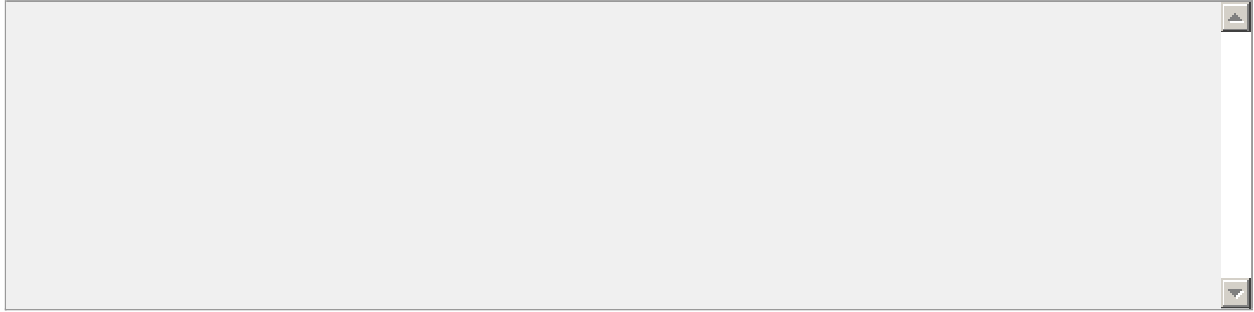
## 13. Assessment

What metrics are used to assess the performance of the records management program? Check all that apply.

- Percentage of departments that participate in the program
- Turnaround time for accessioning, creating box lists, moving items to storage
- Turnaround time for retrieval requests
- Volume of backlog
- Other, please describe

## 14. Additional Comments

Please enter any additional information regarding records management at your library that may assist the authors in accurately analyzing the results of this survey.



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## 15. Call for Documents

Please provide the URLs for the following documents.

If these documents are not available on the Web or if the URL is for a page that is accessible only by the library staff, mail or e-mail the document(s) by February 25, 2008 to:

ARL SPEC Surveys  
21 Dupont Circle NW  
Suite 800  
Washington, D.C. 20036

OR

[SPEC survey staff](#)

NB: Submitted documents may be chosen for inclusion in the published SPEC Kit. Please alert the survey author if a document should not be published.

Job description of records manager

Job description of other professional records management staff

Job description of records management support staff

Records management policy

Records management procedures

Record retention schedules

Online record processing forms

Document that describes the charges for records management services

Records management staff training materials

Records management assessment reports

Check here if print documentation will be sent by mail or e-mail.

Will send document(s) by mail

Will send document(s) by e-mail

## SPEC Survey on Records Management

### 16. Thank you

Thank you for your contribution to this survey!

Questions about the survey, or a request for a PDF of your survey response, can be directed to the [SPEC survey staff](#).

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