

the methods and processes used for managing official and organizational records. This is a timely call to reconsider our whole approach, and to consider that the most relevant issue about personal documentation may not be its identity as a “record” but its link to experience; that what needs to be captured and described, as far as possible, is the creator’s own approach and intention in relation to documenting their own material.

Accountability is widely accepted as a key driver for good recordkeeping. Livia Iacovino acknowledges that accountability viewed through a postmodern lens is multi-faceted, and that the value systems that define accountability are products of their time and place. She asks how archivists can continue to support accountability effectively in an environment of instant communication, decentralized networks, fragmented recordkeeping, and digital fragility. She argues for a continuum approach – one that includes involvement from the formation of the record, during retention decisions, ensuring appropriate access and security – while acknowledging that realistically archivists may not have influence in all of these areas.

My copy of *Currents of Archival Thinking* is already dog-eared, not through any production fault, but from constant reference. This volume provides a valuable early twenty-first-century insight into historical and contemporary perceptions and practices. Overall it is an outstanding addition to the literature. It is both scholarly and accessible, and should be essential reading for students and anyone needing more than a superficial introduction to the discipline.

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**Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories.** MICHAEL J. KURTZ. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004. 254 p. ISBN 1-931666-09-1.

In the last few decades, as archivists have thought and written more attentively about our work, an oft-heard lament has been that we do not put as much effort into honing our management skills. During recruitment for high-level positions, the question is often, “Will they hire an archivist who can manage, or a professional manager who ‘gets’ archives?” Which is better? Which is worse? Students of archivy may chafe at courses on management, but when later confronted with the responsibility of planning and advocating for an archival program, a text on management proves useful. *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* is particularly useful as it focuses explicitly on managing an archives, and is quite palatable as it brings a humanistic approach to management.

Michael Kurtz’s text is one of seven volumes in the Archival Fundamental

Series published by the Society of American Archivists (SAA). The series intends to provide a basic foundation for modern archival practice and theory, and is aimed at archivists working in all types and sizes of organizations.

The volume's thirteen chapters cover the full range of management responsibilities from planning and reporting, human resources, and financial management to facilities management. These more practical aspects are grounded by initial chapters on management theory, leadership, and organizational theory that cover the diversity of approaches to the more nuanced aspects of management. Kurtz emphasizes leadership skills and managing human resources as the two most critical elements. Each chapter ends with both a conclusion that summarizes the key concepts of the chapter, and a discussion of suggested readings to further explore the chapter's topic. This structure is one of the strengths of the book; it filters the theories and literature available in different disciplines, and packages them into manageable doses for those focused on learning how to run an archives. Both the table of contents and back-of-the-book index support this volume's use as a textbook or reference that can be consulted when needed.

A re-crafting of the original 1991 version written by Thomas Wilsted and William Nolte, Kurtz's edition updates and expands content, and more intricately analyses the elements for successful management; what was formerly a paragraph on communications, became an entire chapter emphasizing the importance of this fundamental factor. A chapter added on project management succinctly summarizes steps in a project's life cycle and factors for success. This new chapter also suggests including risk management and a systems approach to project management. Kurtz's edition is more attractive and useful than the first edition, but already is out-of-step with some of the challenges of our technology-driven world.

The chapter on managing information technology wisely emphasizes enduring strategies for the planning and decision-making processes of acquiring and implementing IT resources, yet is already dated. Kurtz's advice to use common sense and to keep focused on program requirements will continue to resonate through increasingly complex and rapidly changing technological opportunities. Written before the rise of social media, the Public Relations chapter is most notably out-of-date and it will be interesting to see how the next version will deal with what are now new communications technologies. Kurtz's emphasis on tailoring public relations to various target audiences through a planned and thorough program should stand the test of time.

In the preface, Richard Cox notes that the value of the books in the Archival Fundamental Series "is that they can provide a sort of benchmark in the development of archival knowledge and work" (p. xii). Dubious praise, but this 2004 edition is a much more sophisticated approach to management: evidence of the continuing maturity of the archival profession.

As an SAA publication, *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories*

uses American examples and case studies; however its advice is useful in other jurisdictions, especially if one of the book's core messages is applied – the need to be alert and open-minded to changing situations. The Fundraising and Development chapter may be less relevant to foreign audiences, as it discusses only American external funding agencies and professional associations; however, the suggested readings include some European and Canadian works.

Kurtz is careful to keep his advice relevant to the variety of organizational environments. The SAA's audience includes large government archives, independent manuscript repositories, "lone arranger" shops, and board-run historical societies. Kurtz generalizes to a common ground that applies to any setting, but offers occasional specifics to reassure even those in one-person institutions that the management skills discussed are applicable to their situation.

*Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* offers some solid practical tools for intentional professional development. Two worth mentioning are time logs (p. 14), used to assess whether time is wasted on non-goal-oriented tasks, and the 360° evaluation, in which superiors, subordinates, and external clients/stakeholders provide feedback on behaviour that is then reviewed with a mentor/coach to develop a plan to address weaknesses. This tool is suggested for both personal development of emotional intelligence, and staff performance evaluations (p. 28, p. 130).

Kurtz is not a management guru but establishes himself as a confident mediator between the reader, and the wealth of management theories and literature. He challenges the reader to develop as a manager, and provides practical advice toward that goal. A senior manager at NARA with a PhD in modern European history, Dr. Kurtz also teaches management at the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies. His book has become a standard on the reading lists of many archives and information management courses. This is a testament to its usefulness as an introductory overview of the skills required to effectively manage an archives.

Management school graduates might dismiss this text as a superficial coverage of complex topics; for students and archivist/managers, however, it is succinct, accessible, and encouraging. It is a balanced coverage of the skills needed to manage well, recognizing that personal development of your emotional intelligence is as much a factor as your ability to budget, plan, and strategize.

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