

The No-Nonsense Guide to Archives and Recordkeeping. By Margaret Crockett. London, UK: Facet Publishing, 2016. 224 pp. Bibliography, index. Softcover. \$115.00.

The No-Nonsense Guide to Archives and Recordkeeping is a useful and concise introduction to archives and records management. Margaret Crockett intended to write a book for those who work in archives and records management but lack formal training in those fields, such as librarians, museum curators, and IT professionals. The author has more than 20 years of experience in the field, holding high-level positions in the Open Society Archives (Budapest, Hungary), the International Monetary Fund (Washington, DC), and the British Medical Association (London). Currently, she works as an archives and records management consultant with Archive-Skills Consultancy Ltd., a company she cofounded.

The book is divided into five sections and is loosely organized according to the records' life cycle. The first chapter, "Concepts and Context," provides an overview of common terminology and concepts, the different types of archival repositories, format types of archives, and who creates and uses archives. The last half of the chapter is devoted to professional development and training. Included are categories and examples of professional organizations, continuing education resources, and skills needed, such as paleography and computer skills.

The second section, "Managing Current Records," focuses on caring for records actively used to support an organization or business starting at their point of creation. Crockett emphasizes the importance of filing, classification schemes, and naming conventions, as well as the challenges electronic records pose. She concludes this section with strategies for identifying and protecting vital records.

The author defines records management as comprising everything that happens to a record from its creation to either its destruction or its transfer to an archival repository. Because the previous chapter already dealt with some of that, the chapter on "Records Management" starts at the point in the records life cycle when records are not continuously needed for current operational purposes. It is by far the largest section of the book. Included is a summary of why records management is needed, which can be used to justify the existence of a records-management program to administrators and stakeholders. Crockett then moves into how to conduct a records survey, complete with a checklist of information to gather and questions to ask the records creators.

Crockett devotes a large part of the chapter to legislation and regulations. She seeks to make her audience aware of the main laws and regulations, but admits that a more in-depth review is outside the scope of this book. The process of creating retention schedules is covered, along with tips for physically storing and providing access to records. Finally, Crockett explains different disposition types and methods.

The fourth section, "Archives Management," begins with how to develop a collecting policy. A checklist and a sample policy are provided. I was able to use this information to revise and restructure my employer's current collecting policy. The checklist was particularly helpful in organizing the collecting policy's sections and in suggesting

additional information to include, such as a policy review date. Crockett explains acquisitions policies, procedures, and types (e.g., donation, loan), along with the importance of intellectual property rights transfer to the archival repository. Other areas covered include accessioning, appraisal, arrangement and description, access, outreach, and advocacy. As in other chapters, Crockett provides definitions and advice on how to accomplish these tasks.

The final chapter of the book is entitled "Archival Preservation." The author maintains that preservation has an impact on all facets of archival work, from acquisitions to accessibility. Crockett stresses that everyone who handles and manages archives is responsible for preservation management. It is of the utmost importance as its goal is to keep the archives forever. This short chapter includes developing preservation policy, storage requirements and environments, handling archives, disaster planning, and conservation. Crockett wraps up the chapter by reemphasizing the need to create a culture at the archives where all staff and researchers are responsible for preservation.

The No-Nonsense Guide to Archives and Recordkeeping delivers a good overview of a big topic. The examples, tables, and checklists are useful and applicable, particularly for those new to the field. A list of all the included tables and checklists appears at the front of the book for easy reference. One small criticism is that the author has included a very limited bibliography. Because this is an introduction to a complex field, a list of further reading or resources for those interested in delving deeper into the various topics covered would have been helpful to include. It is worth noting that since the author is from the United Kingdom, certain examples and terminology may be foreign or irrelevant to US readers. For instance, Crockett refers to "bumf," a British term that *Cambridge Dictionaries* defines as "printed information, such as an advertisement or official document, that is usually unwanted or not interesting." Regardless, most of the information is applicable to US archival repositories.

Overall, Crockett has written an easy-to-read instructional guide to archives and records management that would be useful for people lacking formal training, as well as a good refresher for professionals in the field.

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