ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, AND THE NEW ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL

BY

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in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between organizational theory and archival appraisal theory in an effort to develop better ways of appraising the eventual record as it emerges from the complex networked organizations now prevalent in society. It begins by reviewing the historical perspective of "classic" or pre-industrial organizations and "modern" or industrial bureaucracies as a prelude to more fully understanding "contemporary" or complex networked organizations and their record-keeping systems and practices. The thesis explores how "classic" and then "modern" organizations were qualitatively transformed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through to the present, by focusing on the contributions of several organizational and management theorists as well as the implementation and use of information technologies for creating, organizing, and using records. The types of organizations examined in the study are primarily industrial and bureaucratic in nature rather than those that are religious or educational.

The remainder of this thesis analyzes the implications for archival appraisal stemming from views on how the organization functions and how it creates and uses institutional records. Broad structural and managerial changes in organizational work and workplace culture provide a critical context that archivists must understand when appraising records from the information systems of such organizations. The writings of contemporary appraisal theorists reflect, to varying degrees, that managerial and cultural theory about organizations inform appraisal decisions concerning which records to keep and which to destroy, allowing in turn for more efficient and effective records disposition.
in contemporary and future organizations. The thesis concludes by suggesting that archivists have to not only keep an eye on the organizational experience or context and be prepared to react accordingly, but also remain active in guiding the records creation and record-keeping processes. Future organizations and archivists will need to continue making necessary adaptations in the face of changing conditions, because the transformation in organizational structures, functions, management, and culture has a direct impact on why and how records are created and communicated, and thus provides the context for assessing their relative values in appraisal.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge my thesis advisor, Dr. Terry Cook, for his most valuable advice, expertise, and guidance in this process. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the Archives of Manitoba, a constant source of support as this thesis evolved. To Nancy Stunden, a mentor and friend, I offer my heartfelt thanks for her generous and insightful comments with regard to this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRICATELY CONNECTED:
ORGANIZATIONS, RECORDS, AND APPRAISAL

The implications of information systems and systems re-engineerings, of data interchange and migrations, of corporate data models and system functionality patterns, combined with the ... weakening of hierarchy, general diminution of the importance of structure, and the complexity and volume of modern records [are] creating a new archival world. In this situation, the archival professional needs to rethink... basic tenets and adopt strategic tools.

Terry Cook

Archival appraisal and the consequent formation of “the archive” contain certain implicit assumptions about how organizations function, their culture, and the resulting records. Yet changes in organizational theory and reality have not always been reflected in changes in archival appraisal theory and practice. This disconnection has led archivists to build poor appraisal strategies and resulted in the selection of poorer records for the archives. This thesis analyzes the largely unexplored link between organizational theory and archival appraisal theory in an effort to develop better ways of appraising the eventual record as it emerges from modern organizations. Organizational theory

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including the culture of organizations is connected almost exclusively to the private
business and corporate context, but can also be applied by analogy to the government
context through a study of archival appraisal theory. The appraisal of private sector and
personal and family records is outside the scope of this thesis, even if some of the issues,
contexts, and concepts discussed may apply to it in varying degrees.

To undertake archival work, such as appraisal with institutional records, archivists
may want to consider further how organizations function, since records are defined by,
flow from, and are connected to work processes and activities. In recent years,
influenced in part by new information technologies, the ways in which organizations
function have become much more complex than many archivists previously assumed. A
body of literature on organizational theory has emerged that highlights the importance of
organizational culture in understanding the complex networked organization and the
emergent record-keeping systems.

Archival thinking about the appraisal of organizational records has not been based
on much thinking about how organizations actually work. To the extent that one can
detect any consideration of the “organization” by archivists, until very recently it
reflected the classic and modern organizational theory centred on structure, formal
hierarchy, and mandate. But in-depth examination about how organizations actually do
their work was not a significant aspect of conventional archival thinking until the late
1980s. Indeed, archivists have traditionally emphasized the informational content in
records, rather than the context, organizational or otherwise, behind the creation and
contemporary use of the records.
Recent developments in archival thinking about appraisal (and other archival functions) have moved in the direction of paying greater attention to this deeper context that underpins the creation of records. New approaches, such as documentation strategy and macroappraisal, base appraisal decisions much more heavily on such contextual knowledge. These new approaches to appraisal have adopted the more durable aspects of classic organizational theory, such as its emphasis on knowing the formal structures and mandates of organizations. But they have also begun to explore other, and more elusive, characteristics of how an organization works, such as its internal culture and communication patterns, in order to make appraisal decisions that identify records that better reflect the organization’s actions.

This thesis will explore the characteristics of this emerging, still largely underdeveloped, aspect of archival appraisal theory -- organizational culture -- and its current role and potential value in shaping the function of archival appraisal. After setting the context of classic and modern appraisal and organizational theory, the study will outline how recent organizational theory conceptualizes both the nature of organizational culture and its importance to an understanding of how an organization works. Within the scope of this thesis, the types of organizations that are examined have been defined as follows: “classic” or pre-industrial organizations dating from roughly 1800 to around 1900 – which are, for the most part, unorganized, ad-hoc local factories or small individual shops that exhibit personal idiosyncratic leadership; “modern” or industrial bureaucracies with some overlap with the “classic” period in different places at different rates of development, dating from the later nineteenth century to the 1960s – which consist of rationalized, well-ordered manufacturing firms as well as large-scale
businesses and governments and exhibit both sophisticated managerial hierarchies and internal communication technologies; and, finally, “contemporary” or complex networked organizations dating from the 1960s to the present – consisting of more flexible, fluid, and in some cases, virtual organizations exhibiting flatter hierarchies based on the power of informal discourse, broader organizational participation, and a horizontal blurring of organizational boundaries.

In this thesis, management/organizational and appraisal theory are similarly characterized by three periods, and these terms also need definition. For organizational theory, the “classic” period dates from 1850 to the 1930s and includes the writings of Frederick Taylor, Max Weber, and Chester Barnard who emphasize the scientific study of work methods; the “modern” period dates from the 1930s to the 1960s and includes the ideas of Hugo Munsterberg, Mary Parker Follett, and Elton Mayo who focus on the human aspect of work activities; and the “contemporary” period dates from the 1960s to the present and includes the strategies of Henry Mintzberg, Edgar Schein, and Alfred Chandler who explore, among other things, the interaction between the organization and its internal and external environments.

In the case of appraisal theory, the “classic” period dates from the 1880s to the 1940s and includes the writings of European archivists Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin, and Hilary Jenkinson, who assert a “passive” role for the archivist; the “modern” period runs from the 1940s to the 1970s and includes the ideas of such American archivists as Theodore R. Schellenberg, Maynard Brichford, and Margaret Cross Norton, who all assert a more “active” role for the appraisal archivist; and the “contemporary” period that extends from the 1970s to the present and includes the
strategies of Hans Booms, Helen Samuels, Terry Cook, David Bearman, Sue McKemmish, and Frank Upward, who assert a "post-custodial" role for the appraisal archivist. Organizations, organizational theory, and appraisal theory form the three-part foundation upon which this thesis rests and the interconnections that it explores.

This thesis is a work of intellectual history whose methodology combines a critical qualitative analysis of the main theoretical writers on organizations and archival appraisal, both historical and contemporary. Their works may properly be considered primary sources. The thesis will discuss the usually unquestioned assumptions in their writings about the nature of organizations from which archival records originate.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the "classic" and "modern" writers on organizational and managerial theory from the late nineteenth century to the early 1960s. It will examine who these writers are: their nationality; their discipline; and the context or varied circumstances that shaped the ideas reflected in their published works. More specifically, the chapter will look at the major developments and shifts in thinking about the culture of organizations and its influence upon the development and management of record-keeping systems. The effects of innovation on the development and changes in organizational culture and emergent information and record-keeping systems will also be explored.

Chapter 2 focuses on the post-1960s networked organization and the views of "contemporary" writers on organizational and managerial theory from the early 1960s to the present. Like Chapter 1, this section will flesh out who these writers are and will examine their ideas regarding the organizational culture of complex networked organizations and its influence upon the development and management of information
and record-keeping systems. The chapter will also explore the effects of the introduction of sophisticated information (computerized) technology. Moreover, the new views of workplace culture stemming from various social movements in the second half of the twentieth century will be identified. Taken together, this chapter presents a picture of the contemporary organization by demonstrating its greater speed and flexibility in information work, denser connectivity, flatter hierarchies and broader organizational participation, reliance on teamwork, and a weakening of organizational and structural boundaries.

Chapter 3 provides an analysis of appraisal strategies applied to organizational records by leading archivists in western Europe, North America, and Australia through the classic, modern, and contemporary periods of organizational development identified in Chapters 1 and 2. This study reveals the usually unquestioned assumptions in their writings about the nature of organizations from which archival records originate. In so doing, the chapter examines the numerous appraisal challenges that archivists face in the twenty-first century. Available resources are limited, and continue to wane, while the magnitude of archival appraisal work continues to grow. This is exacerbated by the introduction and widespread use of information technology and the sophistication of contemporary information and record-keeping systems. This paradigm shift is occurring with incredible speed, largely due to the emergence of the Internet, specifically the World Wide Web. It continues to grow exponentially and offers opportunities for electronic commerce on an unprecedented scale.

The implementation of sophisticated processing and communication technologies within organizations since the 1960s has gradually produced radically different forms of
organization and record-keeping contexts and methodologies. The records of complex networked organizations challenge the traditional view of archives as agencies that preserve static records and the original meaning of records as defined by their creators. One archival theorist notes the following:

Flat-file data bases have been eclipsed by multifunctional, relational data bases in which information is lost if the data are stripped from their software. Electronic mail is not just replacing other forms of business correspondence, but it offers the qualities of informality and speed never before seen in a business setting. All manner of electronic communication, from faxes to video conferencing, have changed the style of doing business internationally.²

The primary cause of operational changes is not the challenges associated with sophisticated technology, but the manner in which organizations implement and use such technology. James Taylor and Elizabeth Van Emery argue that “it is a double bind: if managers fail to adapt, they will quickly drop out of the race; if they adapt, their having done so will have changed the world, and they will find themselves in a new environment.”³ In an age of abundance and complexity, the critical appraisal issue no longer rests on how to preserve all of the records of an organization, but how to identify the vast majority of records that can be destroyed after isolating and preserving a smaller portion that accurately reflect the organization, its functions and activities, and its interaction with citizens and society. Contemporary appraisal theorists have conceptualized appraisal differently to reflect the new complex networked organization and its social role.

Chapter 3 will explore the ideas of contemporary appraisal theorists and their reflection of the perceptions of contemporary organizational theorists and real-life organizational behaviour. Moreover, it will examine their attempts to develop an understanding of organizational culture (to varying degrees) and how that assists archival professionals to preserve better evidence of organizational behaviour.

This thesis examines the ideas of the main theoretical writers about organizations and archival appraisal. It will suggest several ideas for archival appraisal that address the challenges and opportunities presented by complex networked organizations. As organizations continue to grow and become more complex in the twenty-first century, archivists should take into consideration new factors shaping organizations, records, and record-keeping systems, and consequently, the ongoing development of appraisal theory and practice.
CHAPTER 1

EMERGENCE OF CLASSIC AND MODERN ORGANIZATIONS
AND RELATED ORGANIZATION THEORY

What industrialization was to the nineteenth century, management is to the twentieth. Almost unrecognized in 1900, management has become the central activity of our civilization. It employs a high proportion of our educated men and determines the pace and quality of our economic progress, the effectiveness of our government services and the strength of our national defense. The way we "manage," the way we shape our organizations, affects and reflects what our society is becoming.

Max Ways

One of the defining characteristics of contemporary life is the degree to which we are joined together by complex, systematic, organizational networks. Complicated social systems are phenomena of such increasing importance that understanding them is a prerequisite to the study of contemporary experience including record keeping and archives. Of even greater importance for those who work with organizational records is the need to understand how organizations work and the information tools they develop to do so effectively.

Complex networked organizations experience tremendous and endless changes.\(^2\)

“Complex” implies that these organizations exhibit virtual characteristics where functions are largely outsourced and permanent offices are rare or non-existent, or extremely numerous and decentralized. “Networked” denotes that these organizations are a collection of autonomous firms or units that behave as a single larger entity, assisted by computer-driven technologies, that simultaneously reacts to the product of the day.

Complex networked organizations are open-ended systems of ideas, activities, and structures and they work faster, more efficiently, and demonstrate greater flexibility due to the “reengineering” process.\(^3\) Rather than focusing on the individual, these organizations centre on teams as the principal building blocks to achieving success.\(^4\)

Moreover, contemporary management methodology focuses on employee participation and empowerment, rather than classic command-and-control top-down hierarchical approaches. Finally, the customer (or the citizen in government contexts) drives the contemporary organization as it carries out its day-to-day operations; even the employee is viewed as an internal customer of other parts of the complex networked organization.

In the twenty-first century, managers are increasingly focusing on a different mandate in terms of how they direct such organizations and what kinds of information and accountability systems they employ.

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To understand these organizations and how they work, as a prelude to comprehending more astutely their record-keeping systems and practices, one must consider studying them in historical perspective. Terry Cook, a contemporary Canadian appraisal theorist and educator, argues that records are the “lifeblood” of any organization and that the study of records and record-keeping systems reveals “the history, nature, and functions of the organization, in the same way that studies of the organization reveal much about the records.”

Barbara L. Craig, another leading Canadian archivist and educator, notes that “our understanding of experience is limited, in part because there are few historical studies of organizations, especially of their specific uses of communication technologies, and the relative importance of business needs and customs in the shaping of records and knowledge transfer across time.”

The study of the history of organizations, especially during periods of technological innovation and change, greatly enriches our understanding. One academic believes this is important because:

**Historical perspective is the study of a subject in light of its earliest phases and subsequent evolution. Historical perspective differs from history in that the object of historical perspective is to sharpen one’s vision of the present, not the past.**

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Historical perspective on organizational communication and record-keeping practices provides a foundation for understanding the complex networked organization and how it works, and informs understanding of its record-keeping systems and practices. This in turn will lead to better appraisal decisions and more efficient and effective records disposition within these organizations.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century institutions experienced managerial shifts as classic organizations began to transform themselves from relatively unorganized factories to rationalized, well-ordered modern institutions. The shift from small independent shops to industrial bureaucracies shaped the development of several bodies of theory and practice among those who study, or interact with, organizations. The nature of the modern industrial organization can be clarified by retracing the thinking that led to its development. Some of the more significant ideas about the organization and related management behaviours that evolved from the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century will be explored in this chapter.

Organizational theory is inextricably linked to the manager’s role in that all organizations require the exercise of managerial functions. As an integral part of explaining the organization, it is necessary to analyze the evolution of managerial work. Taken together, management and organizational theory help to shape total organizational behaviour, including its relation to information and record-keeping systems. Many disciplines have contributed to the development of organizational theory including political science, economics, psychology, sociology, information technology, and engineering. They have all helped to improve our understanding of organizations,
although from a wide range of competing perspectives. By the mid-1980s, one researcher identified 110 unique theories about human work and behaviour within organizations.8

Classic study of organizations began during the mid-nineteenth century. It is likely, however, that small-scale management processes first began in the traditional family structure, expanded to the tribe, and finally penetrated more formalized political, commercial, and religious units such as those found in early Babylonia, as well as in virtually all military organizations. The Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks and Romans organized themselves politically, planned military actions, and controlled trade across vast regional empires.9 But nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century organizations, which are the focus of this thesis, find their roots in the industrial revolution in England after 1700. It was the first nation to transform itself from a rural-agrarian society to an industrial-commercial one. Management within the expanding workshops and factories of England focused on efficiency, through employment of strict controls and firm rules and procedures.

In the United States, the industrial era began in earnest with the Civil War. The second half of the nineteenth century experienced rapid growth, technological innovation, and dramatic expansion of the railroad.10 As a result, manufacturing firms grew in

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9 The thesis will not review the early history of management dating back 7,000 years. For thoughtful discussion, see Claude S. George Jr., The History of Management Thought (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall), 1968.

importance and there was a need for "systematizing and stabilizing both the practices of management and the organization of labour process." The railroad itself, with its tight schedules and many trains operating on the same track, greatly stimulated new organizational approaches to work activities and served as a model for them.

Organizations are blueprints for human activities, but they do not function efficiently until individuals have been recruited to fulfil specified roles and to undertake certain activities. Therefore, the first major problem of any organization is recruiting, selecting, training, and socializing employees and, perhaps most importantly, assigning them to specific jobs where they can perform most efficiently. Alfred Chandler, one of the founders of the study of business history, discusses among other things, the importance of effective job performance within an organization. He set out to examine "the changing processes of production and distribution in the United States and the ways in which they have been managed."12

Chandler argues that modern bureaucratic organizations replaced small individually-owned businesses when coordination by management on a larger scale allowed an increase in productivity, a decrease in costs, and an increase of profits rather than the unplanned responses to market forces of the family or small local firm. Thus, larger organizations initially contained several smaller business units that had previously

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12 Chandler, The Visible Hand, 1.
operated as independent enterprises. Chandler refers to this process as “internalization.”

The internalization of several different units allowed the flow of goods to be coordinated through management. The end result was an increase in the effective use of employees and shops during the processes of production and distribution. Organizations began to reap the rewards of increased productivity and reduced costs. From a records perspective, the railroads and eventually larger organizations sought to achieve better control of business processes and outputs by imposing a system that allowed managers to better operate, evaluate, and adjust based on the controlled flow of ordered information. Within the context of this wider discussion of the development of modern organizations, Chandler focuses on the role of managers and is thus a major contributor to contemporary management theory in addition to the field of business history. Joanne Yates, an American professor of the history of management communication at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, refers to this process as “internal communication systems.”

Moreover, the advantages associated with internalizing the activities of several small businesses within a single organization could not occur until a hierarchical structure was established. Managers replaced traditional market mechanisms in the monitoring and coordination of the productive and distributive processes. In order for these functions to be carried out, management had to invent new means of operating practices and procedures. Thus, standard buying, pricing, production, and marketing policies were

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13 Ibid., 7.
established. As a result more effective record-keeping systems had to be established to make operational and to control these new activities.¹⁵

Chandler concludes that large-scale businesses appear for the first time in history when the volume of economic activities reached a level where managerial coordination became a more efficient and profitable means of administration than simple market forces. An increase in economic activity, as well as the introduction of sophisticated technology and expanded markets, transformed the size and structure of business. To be competitive in expanded markets, large-scale businesses transferred their administrative responsibilities to increasingly sophisticated managerial hierarchies. A philosophy of management evolved in response to these new needs that “promoted rational and impersonal systems in preference to personal and idiosyncratic leadership for maintaining efficiency in a firm’s operations.”¹⁶

Once such a managerial hierarchy was established and successfully performing its administrative functions, the hierarchy itself became “a source of permanence, power, and continual growth.”¹⁷ The case of American railroads in the latter half of the nineteenth century illustrates this point. The demands of managing railroad development led to changes in managerial principles and practices. Mismanaged expenditures and the lack of official designation of duties and responsibilities proved to be disastrous in the competitive market.¹⁸ Thus, the selection of employees at all levels within the hierarchical organization depended upon specialized skills and knowledge. The

¹⁵ Chandler, The Visible Hand, 7.
¹⁶ Yates, Control Through Communication, 1.
¹⁷ Chandler, The Visible Hand, 8.
¹⁸ Yates, Control Through Communication, 7.
promotion of employees became increasingly based upon training, experience, and performance rather than on family connections.¹⁹

Chandler’s contribution to organizational theory was to outlines why, how, where, and when modern industrial organizations emerged. The new managerial hierarchy that administered these organizations grew and favoured long-term stability over quick profits, thus altering the basic structures of the economy. Managers “took over from the market the coordination and integration of the flow of goods and services from the production of raw materials through the several processes of production to the sale to the ultimate consumer.”²⁰

A new framework cemented itself within organizations during this period, including a clear division of labour and management. It facilitated technical innovation in that “mechanization was necessary to destroy old work habits and to tie the worker to the unvarying regularity of the machine.”²¹ One writer noted that the industrial revolution was considered to be “a technological revolution, the application of mechanical power to manufacturing, which revolutionized not only the process of production but also society and the economy as a consequence.”²²

The implementation and use of information technologies for creating, organizing, and using records had a measurable effect on these nineteenth-century organizations. Peter Drucker, the renowned advisor on business policy and management to a number of large American corporations, noted about management theory that technology-based revolutions had an enormous impact on organizations, including information-producing

²⁰ Ibid., 11.
²¹ Thompson and McHugh, Work Organizations, 22.
and information-managing technologies. Technology more generally, in Drucker's view, profoundly changed the "economies, markets, and industry structures; products and services and their flows; consumer segmentation, consumer values, and consumer behavior; jobs and labor markets." To a degree, managers of these new, larger organizations all faced a choice in the technology they employed, in that they could choose to routinize their activities in different ways and to varying degrees. Technology was thus not a completely independent force. However, from the moment a basic technology was selected, successful organization depended on developing compatible structures, behaviours, control and communication systems, managerial styles, and new methods of creating, using, and keeping records. Modern industrial organizations developed and prospered as long as management guided this record-keeping process in a centralized and structured fashion, enabling the organization to make necessary adaptations in the face of changing conditions.

The technology deployed by these organizations varied between their different units or structures. Controls and managerial styles were needed to match these variations. Increasingly, the successful modern organizations were those that placed considerable emphasis on the opportunities available through innovation. Managers became the catalysts for encouraging innovation. Examination of the increased implementation and use of sophisticated technology within bureaucratic and industrial organizations reveals important challenges and solutions among the emergent record-keeping systems. Sophisticated technology also forecasts the structure and efficiency of more contemporary or complex networked organizations.

In the nineteenth century, the older classic organization was specific in every detail and run ad hoc. However, by the early twentieth century, managerial controls were based upon "an infrastructure of formal communication flows: impersonal policies, procedures, processes, and orders flowed down the hierarchy; information to serve as the basis for analysis and evaluation flowed up the hierarchy." Communication became an increasingly important aspect of the managerial solution to organizational inefficiency in the twentieth century. Thus, the effective flow of accurate and timely documentation was the primary mechanism of managerial control. Modern organizations achieved operational changes as managers improved the upward, downward, and horizontal flow of communication, through better control of records with improved record-keeping systems and record or information-making technologies. The railroads led the way in developing "a genre of communication as an efficient mechanism of control."25

In most organizations, there was a massive amount of information that needed to be communicated. "Communication occurred in the early stages, as records information was transmitted up or across the hierarchy, or at later stages, when information was communicated to its users up, down, and across the hierarchy."26 While this style of management introduced and formalized a sophisticated internal communication process, improvements in information technology influenced the way organizations operated, as managers strove to reach maximum efficiency.27

The introduction of typewriters, filing cabinets, carbon-copy duplicators, adding machines, dating stamps, envelope sealers, and a whole range of file folders, indexing

25 Yates, Control Through Communication, 79.
26 Chandler and Cortada, A Nation Transformed by Information, 122.
27 Information technologies continue to influence the way contemporary organizations operate. This will be explored further in Chapter 2 of this thesis.
books, and filing devices – even paper clips – revolutionized the creation of documents in the late nineteenth century as organizations searched for efficiency in managing the increasing amount of paperwork arising from the higher volume and greater complexity of business. Joanne Yates concludes that these new information technologies “contributed to the specialization of office skills and consequently created an opportunity for applications of scientific and systematic management to the office as well as to the factory floor.”

Records are created, used and stored for various reasons. The mechanisms with which they are created and used include writing materials and implements, as well as mechanical devices. In light of the various internal communications that emerged during the late nineteenth and twentieth century, records creators responded to the new demands imposed upon them. This occurred in response to the growing and changing management philosophies that were heavily influenced by technological innovation. There was a mounting need to make the internal communication process more efficient in terms of speed and legibility.

For example, the modern organization increasingly required that multiple copies of documents be created simultaneously, for distribution to more and more managers at headquarters (in order to coordinate policy and operations consistently) and to far flung regional office managers. By the end of the nineteenth century, the typewriter was used to meet these requirements in most organizations. The typewriter by then had become “the

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28 Yates, Control Through Communication, 64.
29 For discussion of the technology of record making, see James O'Toole, Understanding Archives and Manuscripts (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1990), 15-20.
30 For an interesting discussion of upward, downward and vertical communication and the interrelationships among managerial functions, communication technologies, and communication genres, see Chapter 3 of Yates' work, Control Through Communication.
usual agent by which records were created, and the very ease with which it could do so increased geometrically the number and variety of records that could be produced.”

This allowed organizations to create a great amount of records with increased speed and efficiency. Once typewriters provided a broad uniformity within organizations in production of records, organizations focused on an efficient means for the production of multiple copies.

Carbon paper became widely used in conjunction with the typewriter to produce several copies. Organizations also began to employ letter-press copying technology, whereby the ink of an original record was “pressed” against a thin copying paper using water and pressure. Early twentieth-century duplicating machines facilitated the creation of a large number of copies from a single document, but the copies had to be made more or less at the same time as the original. However, by the 1950s, this all changed with the invention and widespread introduction of xerography. It allowed for the production of many copies using dry powder, electrical charges, and the reflection of light. This enabled individuals to create copies when needed, rather than only simultaneously with the original, and in much larger quantities than earlier methods.

With the increased production of paper records, modern bureaucratic organizations focused their attention on improving methods for keeping track of them. The records and record-keeping systems for most government offices during this period were not simply a by-product of the activities of institutions, instead they were often

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32 The Archives of Manitoba has in its custody various examples of letter-press technology including letter-press copying books containing inward and outward correspondence for numerous Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and other senior Manitoba government officials. For example, see *Deputy Provincial Treasurer's outward correspondence*, 1877 – 1911, F 0088, GR0007, G 10433 – G 10447.
carefully planned. Indeed, they were powerful, administrative instruments. Cook explores the history of records created in conjunction with the federal administration of northern Canada up to the late 1950s and notes that the resulting records

...were not neutral forces over and above which northern administration developed in whichever way its officials wished. Rather, records were an integral part of that development, often shaping and restraining it.33

The introduction of typewriters, carbon paper, xerography, and other copying technologies, as well as the increasing complexity of institutional functions, spurred on the growth of government records. Margaret Cross Norton, Illinois State Archivist from 1922 to 1957, outlined the principal purposes for which government records were created and the form they took in most departments during this period. They include charters; registers; minutes; proceedings; and debates of boards and commissions; judicial records; administrative records; reports; and research data.34

A new record-keeping system known as vertical filing played an important role in the management of this increasing amount of information by the early twentieth century. Early on, organizations realized it was more efficient for individuals to group documents they held on a particular topic, person, or case. This flexible system was known as “flat filing” because documents were stored loosely in boxes or drawers. Several significant improvements led to the introduction of vertical filing systems. In nineteenth-century government and business settings, numerous individuals created large quantities of records and stored them in their own personal filing systems, vertically in file cabinets. Moreover, governments came to rely on registry systems in which “individual documents

34 For further discussion, see Thornton W. Mitchell, (ed.), Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival and Records Management (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1975), 132-156.
were controlled by means of elaborate numbering, sometimes including greater or lesser indexing or notation of the contents.”

Registries were both central offices that held the records of an organization and intellectual tools for recording its information resources. Vertical file registries were particularly important in government departments where business was often conducted over years or even decades, and reflected the intricacies between citizens and government. In this way, the personal, local memory held in classic organizations was replaced by official, corporate and recorded memory in more modern institutions.

A study of the British Treasury’s registry system between 1900 and 1950 emphasizes that the historical perspective on record keeping helps to illuminate the structure and operating culture of modern organizations and their functions, the kinds of records created within these organizations, and the classification and nature of business affairs and the relative importance of their varied transactions. The creation and maintenance of this registry over a fifty-year period demonstrates a clear need on the organization’s part to establish a sense of order for managers and their work. By the 1890s, vertical files were relied upon more than older flat files because they facilitated the filing of related documents together according to different categories that often changed over time. This system the technique of organizing documents which shared characteristics (for example, subject, location, and client) into files and then the files into

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35 O’Toole, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*, 18.
37 Ibid., 135.
drawers in vertical filing cabinets according to "an appropriate and accessible filing system." 38

It is not surprising that railroads were the leaders in merging various idiosyncratic records-storage systems into a single vertical filing system and that its emergence affected both internal and external communication within large-scale organizations. It is also during this period that a new position was developed to manage the records. Initially clerical, but increasingly professional, records managers were assigned the job of pouring through records to determine which ones should be kept to support business requirements, for how long, and under what file name and number, as well as which records should be discarded when no longer useful.

Organizations also identified a business need to analyze quantitative data as they increasingly focused on monitoring efficiency and controlling processes. This resulted in the development and use of calculating devices that sped up the process of performing numerical calculations, just as the typewriter had made the recording of textual information faster. Adding machines that printed out the numbers entered the workplace; as a result, the totals in addition, subtraction, and even multiplication were both more accurate and more quickly produced than the tabulations performed manually even by skilled accountants. Specialized billing and bookkeeping machines also appeared by the early twentieth century, to analyze the quantitative information entered on a keyboard and registered for use in calculations.

38 Chandler and Cortada, A Nation Transformed by Information, 118. The Archives of Manitoba has in its custody numerous examples of the registry and vertical filing systems. The Minister of Health's office files series, H 0001, GR5136 and the Deputy Minister of Health's office files series, H 0003, GR3830 are excellent examples of the vertical filing system within the Manitoba government context. The operations and programs files central registry series, ATG 0132, GR3550 is an example of the centralization of subject files respecting policy and implementation of the programs and operations of the Department of Justice.
These new technologies enabled modern organizations to use and reuse numerical data, contributing further to the managerial demand to analyze quantitative data in order to monitor worker efficiency and control production processes. Machines that could perform mathematical computations in an increasingly sophisticated and much quicker way, using electrical currents rather than mechanical gears and wheels, appeared shortly after the Second World War. The information handling capability of these computational machines (or computers) expanded exponentially almost annually, while their size and cost decreased significantly. These machines and the invention of the integrated circuit and silicon chip, and their significance in terms of the creation, use and storage of organizational information will be examined in the following chapter, as part of the story of more contemporary networked organizations.

The remainder of this chapter explores how the classic organization was transformed into the modern organization between the nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century by focusing through the lens of several organizational and management theorists. The study of the development of modern bureaucracy is reflected in their work as they wrestled with issues involving the hierarchical nature of organizations, new work methods, greater specialization, and the increasing division of labour. Cost accounting, standardization of work and use of unskilled workers required new forms of coordination, integration, and control as well as new methods of creating, using, and keeping records. These organizational theorists both charted, and served as a catalyst for, the transformation of the older classic organization and its management into its modern counterparts.

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Managers in modern organizations were now required to focus increasingly on devising new methods and controls to maximize efficiency and to coordinate the work of others. They attempted to plan, organize, and control the work of these large firms and often discussed their ideas at meetings and presented their findings in early engineering publications; their decisions and new processes and procedures are also reflected in the new record-keeping systems.

**Classic and Modern Management Theory**

In response to these challenges of size, growth, and complexity, classic management theorists studied ways to manage work and make organizations more efficient. There are three different approaches to this in the history of management thinking. The “scientific management approach,” represented by the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, and Henry Gantt, focuses on the study of work methods with the goal of improving worker efficiency. These theorists concerned themselves with problems such as job definition, incentive systems, and selection and training. The “bureaucratic approach,” pioneered most notably by Max Weber, focuses on the need for organizations to operate in a rational and clearly structured manner, rather than relying on the arbitrary whims of owners and managers. The “administrative management approach,” supported by Henri Fayol and Chester Barnard, explores principles that can be used by managers to coordinate the internal activities of organizations. This school of thought encompasses early works and related contributions
that have formed the main roots of the field of management. To these three schools of thought, the analysis now turns.

Scientific management is an approach within classical management theory that emphasizes the scientific study of work methods in order to improve worker efficiency. Frederick Winslow Taylor made major contributions to both management and organization theory based on his work at the shop level in the steel industry. Born to a wealthy family in 1856, Taylor became an apprentice pattern maker and machinist for a local firm before moving on to The Midvale Steel Company in Philadelphia. Taylor was exposed to management problems in 1884 when he became the chief engineer of the company. He recognized that, despite the superior and often arrogant manner of management toward employees, it was essentially the workers who ran the plants. After studying the problem, Taylor formulated the first systematic presentation of scientific management in a paper entitled “The Engineer as an Economist.”

Taylor became one of the first management thinkers to advocate control of human behaviour in organizations and to call attention to the importance of people in the quest for efficiency and productivity. His many improvements led him to generalize that four principles could be applied to all social activities including the management of homes, universities, farms and government departments: the development of a true science of work; the scientific selection and progressive development of the worker; the meshing of the science of work and the scientifically selected and trained worker; and the close relationship between management and workers.

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Taylor's main objective was to solve the "soldiering" problem he observed among individuals. Soldiering involved deliberately working at less than full capacity and occurred, he believed, for three reasons. To begin, he argued that workers fear that increasing their productivity will cause them or other workers to lose their jobs. Secondly, workers conclude that there is no personal profit in working and thus restrict output because of their desire to avoid rate cuts. Consequently, Taylor argued that if management knew how long it should take a worker to complete a job, this information would eliminate the necessity of cutting rates. In other words, if management could establish fixed rates, the individual is forced to do a "good day's work" to earn reasonable wages. Therefore, according to Taylor, the exact scientific determination of the maximum speed at which a job can be done is the means through which the wage problem could be solved. Finally, Taylor believed deliberately working at less than full capacity occurs because work methodologies and rules of thumb handed down from generation to generation are often inefficient. Combined together, these factors led Taylor to conclude that managers, not workers, are responsible for soldiering because it is the responsibility of managers to set up a means by which productivity could be encouraged. Of course, tracking all this data through analyses of work processes generated and required a wide range of new records as well as new ways of storing and retrieving them for ongoing analysis.

Taylor focused on the basic physical activities involved in production typified by a time-methods study. His "time studies" involve breaking down the work task into its various components, eliminating the unnecessary components, determining the best way

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to perform tasks, and timing each component to discern the total amount of production that could be expected per day. He investigated the effective use of human beings in industrial organizations, and analyzed the interaction between the characteristics of humans and the social and task environments created by organizations. The actual area of behaviour considered by Taylor and his successors in the scientific management approach to organizational theory was much narrower, however. Because of the historical "accidents" of their positions and training, as well as the specific problems they faced in industry, Taylor and his associates primarily studied the use of workers as adjuncts to machines in the performance of routine productive tasks. Taylor's system of management served to mechanize the worker, in effect by splitting the functions of hand and brain, as well as engineering giant leaps in efficiency. But it also dehumanized the workplace. Under its influence, more and more individuals were employed to provide "hands," while their managers provided the brains. Yet to sweeten the process, Taylor also advocated wage increases of 30 to 100 percent where new work methods were used to attain daily productivity standards.

Although praised for his work, Taylor did experience varying degrees of opposition. Some managers believed that he was exploiting workers by getting them to produce more, leading, for example, to large-scale work-force reductions. Despite this, Taylor began to apply scientific management to other non-steel sectors of American business, including the railroads. At the American government's Interstate Commerce

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Commission in which the railroads sought to increase freight rates, Taylor testified they could reduce costs using the scientific management approach. This interest in his ideas helped increase Taylor's public profile and scientific management gradually spread throughout the United States and Europe by the end of the First World War.

The development of modern organizations in the latter part of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century is characterized by the concept of a structured approach to management. The development and growth of these organizations also demonstrate, among other things, a shift in ownership and a shift from personal to impersonal management, the development of new technologies for manufacturing, and the pressure to maintain efficient production. The convergence of rapid growth, decreasing costs of production, improved communication and transportation, and competition led to problems never witnessed before. The invention of scientific management was a solution that attempted to solve these issues including abolishing much of the power workers exercised over the production processes. The managerial role and hierarchical layering of organizations forced the development of rational structures and facilitated the distribution of responsibilities within organizations. Scientific management reflects “an attempt to determine, by creating standardized ways of performing” the ways in which work could be done most efficiently “in the proper conduct of a firm’s activities.”

48 Duncan, Great Ideas in Management, 54-55.
The scientific management approach brought considerable precision of measurement into the organization of the individual worker's production activities. It raised and partially answered a number of fundamental questions about human engineering. It stimulated an impressive number of studies of the physiological constraints on manual operations and showed that it is feasible to specify precisely the activities involved in routine production tasks. In this respect, Taylor's work in scientific management is more relevant to mechanization and automation than the broader psychological aspects of human behaviour in organizations. It is also, evidently, more relevant to industrial organizations producing "hard" standardized products and more difficult to apply to "softer" organizations, such as in government or education, which produce services tailored to each client. Nevertheless, Taylorism and the whole concept of performance measurement influenced all modern organizations and the kinds of records they created and used.

Henry L. Gantt worked closely with Taylor at the Midvale and Bethlehem Steel Companies. Gantt later became a management consultant and is credited with developing the Gantt chart, a graphic aid to planning, scheduling, and control that is still being used today. He also devised a pay incentive whereby workers and supervisors are paid extra when they reach prescribed work standards. He argued that this incentive would encourage supervisors to coach workers needing assistance. Gantt's writings reflect

Taylor’s influence. However, Gantt differentiated himself by focusing on the social aspect of management and business more generally. By 1917, Gantt argued businesses need to seek a balance between profit and public good. His focus was on large-scale businesses that attempt to exert monopolistic power in the form of decreased customer responsiveness and excess profits.

Frank and Lillian Gilbreth were also major supporters of Taylor’s scientific management approach to understanding organizations. The couple began motion studies aimed at reducing unnecessary motions in the workplace, thus reducing work fatigue. They concentrated on seventeen basic motions, each called a “therblig.” Although Frank passed away at a young age, Lillian pressed on and pursued a doctorate in psychology. Her doctoral thesis was published as a book, *The Psychology of Management*, making it one of the earliest works that applied the findings of psychology to business. She defined the psychology of management as “the effect of the mind that is directing the work upon that which is directed, and the effect of this undirected and directed work upon the mind of the worker.” In particular, Gilbreth furthered the definition of scientific management by focusing on analysis and synthesis. Much like Taylor, Gilbreth argued that tasks should be broken down into their essential parts (analysis). Then tasks should be redefined using only the essential elements necessary for

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51 Duncan, *Great Ideas in Management*, 137-140.
52 “Therblig” is “Gilbreth” spelled backwards, with the “t” and “h” reversed. Therbligs included motions such as walk, lift, and hold — motions that were used to study tasks in a number of industries.
efficient work (synthesis). Gilbreth also had an interest in the human implications of scientific management, arguing the purpose of scientific management is to help individuals reach their maximum potential by developing their skills and abilities.\(^5^4\)

German sociologist Max Weber developed the bureaucratic approach, which is the second major trend within classic management theory. This approach emphasizes the need for a systematic, rational implementation of organizational structures based on sociological theories of bureaucracy. Indeed the term “bureaucracy” was explicitly defined in the early twentieth century by Weber.\(^5^5\) Born in 1864 to a wealthy family with strong political and social connections, Weber pursued work as a professor, consultant, and author throughout his life, making major contributions that cross a number of academic disciplines, such as management, sociology, economics, and philosophy.\(^5^6\)

Weber was a very perceptive observer of history and noted that the story of society as well as the rise of civilization was a story of power and domination. He argued that different social epochs were characterized by different forms of political rule. For a ruler or group of rulers to sustain power and legitimacy, they had to develop appropriate administrative tools and organizational structures.

His ideas emerged in light of the prevailing notions of class consciousness and nepotism. For example, only individuals with aristocratic birth could become officers in the Prussian army or attain high-level positions within government and industry. Weber


\(^{55}\) Although bureaucracy had developed several times independently in ancient civilizations, Max Weber was the first theorist to understand it as one of the forces driving human history. For thoughtful discussion, see James R. Beniger, *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 6.

argued that this situation was not only unfair, but also led to organizational ineffectiveness. There was no possibility of organizations capitalizing on the talents of individuals who were not of aristocratic birth. Thus, Weber argued that bureaucracy must be an administrative arrangement which allows legitimate power to be channelled through hierarchical structures toward the performance of objective tasks using the most talented workers.\(^{57}\)

Weber focused on the new large-scale organizations arising from the industrial revolution to determine how they might best operate according to his formulation of the characteristics of the “ideal bureaucracy.” He understood that such a bureaucracy did not exist, but his purpose was to develop ideas that could be used as a starting point in understanding large organizations. He saw the bureaucratic form of the organization as a tool of a centralized administration, where the legitimacy of those in power is underpinned by a respect for the rule of law. In a bureaucracy, laws, rules, policies, procedures and predefined routines are dominant. They give form to a clearly defined system of administration wherein the exercise of “due process” is important. It is commonly known that bureaucracies are supposed to operate “by the rules.” They are places where individual initiative, enterprise, judgment and creativity take second place to the policies and procedures that have been defined or authorized by those in charge of the organization as a whole. Weber argued that rules, based on technical knowledge, are established with the expectation that they will regulate the organization’s structure and processes in order to reach maximum efficiency.\(^{58}\)

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57 Pugh, Hickson and Hinnings, *Writers on Organizations*, 21.
Weber observed that the bureaucratic approach to organization mechanized the process of administration, exactly as machines had routinized production in industry. His writings make frequent reference to how the process of mechanization eliminated the human dimension. As he wrote:

The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely technical superiority over any form of organization. The fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production...the more the bureaucracy is “dehumanized,” the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business, love, hatred, and purely personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation.\(^{59}\)

According to Weber, bureaucracy is a rational legal form of organization that carries mechanistic principles into all areas of social life. His writings illustrate how a respect for legal order ultimately serves to create rigid, rule-bound institutions. Weber’s classic bureaucracy represented the traditional organizational pyramid under the strict control of a chief executive. Authority is distributed in a hierarchy of positions, each successive layer in the hierarchy embracing in authority all positions beneath it. In this case, authority adhered to the office or the position, not the person. Moreover, such authority is impersonal, restricted, and delimited according to the specification of the office and its location in the hierarchy.\(^{60}\)

Weber also argued that selection and advancement of members within the organization should always be based on qualifications and performance. Rules and procedures are established to make the handling of various contingencies efficient. The


\(^{60}\) Pugh, Hickson and Hinnings, \textit{Writers on Organizations}, 22.
organization tries to codify important operational principles and is run in accordance with those principles. Meetings are viewed as a waste of time and are rarely necessary because almost every contingency is well understood in advance. The organization is therefore operating, Weber assumed, in an ultra-stable environment. Those critical of Weber’s ideal bureaucracy argued that it is hampered by excessive rules and that such stability rarely exists in an ever-changing world. However, when Weber’s work was translated into English in the 1940s, many managers in the United States found his ideas useful in considering how organizations could be more effectively managed. Of course, implementing Weber’s approach generated a whole range of new records, from organizational charts to mandate statements, from policy directives to detailed procedural manuals, from job descriptions to work reporting. Records management too, as an organizational function, was centralized and formalized within the Weberian hierarchy, from its earlier local and informal sittings.

While Taylor, Gantt, the Gilbreths and Weber were developing the scientific and bureaucratic management approaches to organizational structure and behaviour, a third approach within classic management theory was taking shape. The administrative management approach to understanding organizations focused on principles that could be used by managers to coordinate the internal activities of organizations. Henri Fayol and Chester Barnard, executives of major organizations, are leading contributors to this approach.

A French industrialist, Henri Fayol was born in 1841 to a middle-class family near Lyon. Fayol produced what is considered the first comprehensive statement of a

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61 Duncan, Great Ideas in Management, 60-61 and 91-97.
general theory of management. Initially published in France in 1916, Fayol's work was largely ignored in the United States until it was translated into English in 1929.\textsuperscript{62} He worked as a mining engineer with the French coal-and-iron combine Commentary-Fourchambault Company, first as an apprentice and then progressing to managing director in 1888. Throughout his career, Fayol strove to secure a strong financial position for the company. Experiences as a high-level manager convinced him that knowledge acquired by managers should be passed on to individuals with administrative responsibilities.

Fayol's approach rested in part on isolating major functions of business activities. This functional approach to management included planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling business activities.\textsuperscript{63} Fayol also introduced several principles he found useful in managing the coal-and-iron company, including division of work, authority, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, and subordination of individual interest to general interest. According to Fayol, the division of work resulted in efficiencies and is applicable to both managerial and technical functions. However, he stressed that there are limits on the extent to which work can be divided. Fayol also argued that businesses require authority to give orders and the power to demand obedience.

There are two types of administrative authority: formal authority assigned to the relevant office; and the personal authority of its actual incumbent based on factors such as intelligence and experience. Fayol stressed that discipline is mandatory for the


effective operations of the organization and the kind of discipline is dependent upon the worthiness of its leaders. Moreover, Fayol argued that employees should receive orders from only one superior and that activities aimed at accomplishing one task should be organized so that there is only one plan and only one supervisor in charge. Finally, the interests of an individual within the organization should not supersede the interests and goals of the organization. Many of the principles of management that Fayol outlined are still widely used today.

Chester Barnard is another major contributor to the administrative management approach within classic management theory. Born in 1886 in Massachusetts, he went to Harvard but did not complete his degree. Barnard worked with American Telephone and Telegraph as a statistician, and progressed to the position of president of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company in 1927. He wrote about the effective administration of organizations in the Functions of the Executive, published in 1938.

Barnard concluded that organizations require three elements in order to operate efficiently: communication, a willingness to serve, and a common purpose. Therefore, managers need to ensure a proper means of communication, foster a willingness to cooperate among employees, and develop and nurture a common purpose among employees. The common purpose facilitates cooperation among employees and gives meaning to the work environment.

Another integral piece of Barnard’s work was the acceptance theory of authority. This theory argued authority does not depend as much on “persons of authority” who

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64 Fayol, General and Industrial Management, 61-98.
give orders as on the willingness of those who received the orders to comply. It is the employee who decides whether to comply with orders. In this case, authority flows from the bottom up. Barnard furthered this argument by stating that employees accept direction from management if they understand the communication, see the communication as consistent with the goals of the organization, feel the actions required are consistent with the needs of employees, and view themselves and others as mentally and physically capable of complying with the orders. Barnard’s acceptance theory received some negative feedback in light of his focus on subordinate acceptance. However, this theory highlights that employees do not necessarily accept and comply with orders from above simply because they are handed down by management. Thus, managers need to focus on the way in which they attempt to exert authority and power. In this case, organizational culture is as important as Weber’s organization structures and hierarchy, or Taylor’s scientific management of work processes.

Barnard’s focus on the reactions of employees to orders and authority occurred in conjunction with the development of behaviour management theory. Barnard was aware of early behaviouralist works including those of Mary Parker Follett and the Hawthorne Studies. Most theorists within the classic management school viewed individual workers as part of the mechanisms of production. As such, those theorists’ efforts focused on means through which mechanisms of production could be used in a more effective way. The idea that an employee’s production might be influenced by internal reactions to various aspects of the job was not seen as a contributing factor. However, theorists working within the behavioural management school of organizational theory emphasized

the importance of understanding the various factors that affect human behaviour in organizations and thus became a fourth, if later, modern component of management theory, building on and sometimes challenging the scientific, bureaucratic, and administrative approaches already discussed.

Several factors led to the development of the more modern behaviour management theory by the 1930s. Following legalization of union-management collective bargaining in the United States, managers began searching for new and innovative ways of dealing with employees. Once unions entered factories, the desired emphasis on improved human relations and preferred working conditions was finally taken seriously by managers. Behavioural scientists conducting research on day-to-day activities within the workplace at this time also advocated more attention to the human aspect of work.\(^68\)

The study of behaviour management theory includes four parts: the work of early behaviouralists including Hugo Munsterberg, Mary Parker Follett and Elton Mayo; the Hawthorne Studies; the human relations movement; and the more contemporary behavioural science approach. Munsterberg, Follett and Mayo focused their attention on human behaviour in organizations and findings from the Hawthorne Studies that indicated that employees were more than just mechanisms of production. This notion led to the development of the human relations movement, with its emphasis on concern for the employee. However, it was the behavioural science approach that provided a focus on scientific research, emerging to build more specific theories about behaviour in organizations that provided practical guidelines for managers.

Hugo Munsterberg was born in 1863 in Germany. He earned both a PhD in psychology and a medical degree. In 1892, he opened a psychological laboratory at Harvard and focused on practical applications of psychology. He started by looking at industrial applications of psychology, which led him to publish Psychology and Industrial Efficiency in 1913.\(^6^9\) Munsterberg argued that psychologists could help organizations in three major areas. The first area is closely linked to the scientific management approach in that the focus is on studying work and finding ways of identifying individuals best suited to that work. However, the other two areas emphasize factors other than those characteristic of classic management theory that could influence the behaviour of individuals at work. For example, Munsterberg identified ideal conditions under which individuals perform at their very best. He also developed ways to influence individuals to behave in ways that are aligned with management interests. Munsterberg’s work led to the establishment of the field of industrial psychology and he is credited with being the first theorist to study human behaviour in a work setting.\(^7^0\)

Mary Parker Follett was another early behaviouralist whose primary focus was on group dynamics within organizations. She was born in 1868 in Boston and had an educational background in political science. Follett worked as a social worker and became interested in employment and workplace issues. Follet was one of few women to become a management consultant in the industrial world of the 1920s. A writer ahead of her time, she argued that employees are complex beings with various attitudes, beliefs and needs. In her view, individuals are constantly influenced by groups within the


organization. Moreover, groups are able to exercise control over themselves and their activities. Follett advocated that managers should motivate employees to attain optimal job performance rather than simply demanding it.\textsuperscript{71} Current methodology regarding self-managing teams stems from Follett's work on group dynamics.

Differentiating herself from most classic management theorists (except Barnard), Mary Parker Follett believed that organizational power is a joint initiative between employees and managers. This idea involved employees and managers working cooperatively, rather than managers simply exercising control and authority over employees.\textsuperscript{72} Follett used the concept of integration to demonstrate the usefulness of distributed power. Integration involved searching for solutions to problems by both management and employees. Follett noted that "integration involves invention, and the clever thing is to recognize this, and not to let one's thinking stay within the boundaries of two alternatives that are mutually exclusive."\textsuperscript{73} Current methodologies regarding conflict resolution stem from Follett's work.

As Follett continued to focus on group dynamics, Australian-born Elton Mayo focused on the needs of employees. In 1949, he noted that "the passage from an established to an adaptive social order has brought into being a host of new and unanticipated problems for management and for the individual worker."\textsuperscript{74} Mayo's writings emphasized that employees must first be understood as people, if they are to be

\textsuperscript{71} Kreitner and Kinicki, \textit{Organizational Behavior}, 12.
\textsuperscript{72} See Mary Parker Follett, \textit{Freedom and Coordination} (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960); for further nuance, see Andrews' introduction to Barnard's \textit{The Function of the Executive} and Duncan, \textit{Great Ideas in Management}.
understood as members of the organization. It is clear he was committed to analyzing the behaviour of employees as they affect, and are affected by, organizational processes. Mayo inspired the Hawthorne studies and he headed this new research at the Western Electric Company plant.

The Hawthorne studies contributed to an increasing focus on the human element within organizations through the 1950s. Managers and academics continued to make claims about the powerful impact individual needs, supportive supervision, and group dynamics have on individual performance. The writings of classic management theorists, such as Taylor and Weber, overlook the human impact on productivity, specifically the effect of personal attention from supervisors and relationships between group members. The Hawthorne studies and the related emphasis on the human element within organizations represent a major shift in the study of management. As one academic pointed out, "no other theory or set of experiments has stimulated more research and controversy nor contributed more to change in management thinking than the Hawthorne studies and the human relations movement they spawned."75

The Hawthorne studies confirmed the importance of understanding the social aspects of human behaviour in organizations. The studies highlight the fact that managers

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needed to possess technical and social skills as well as an understanding of how to increase job satisfaction among individuals, not just technical and scientific knowledge about work processes. Abraham Maslow and Douglas McGregor are two theorists who furthered the study of human relations in the modern workplace.

Abraham Maslow was born in 1908 in Brooklyn and received his PhD in psychology at the University of Wisconsin. While teaching at the Brandeis University, Maslow developed a theory of motivation based on three principles regarding human nature. The first principle states that individuals have needs that are never completely satisfied. Secondly, individuals are concerned with fulfilling needs that are unsatisfied. Finally, human needs fit into a hierarchy of needs. The discovery of the need for developing an individual’s full potential provided managers with new ideas on motivation. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is insightful as it argued that managers need to focus on more than pay incentives when thinking about motivating individuals. It also encouraged managers to focus on other needs individuals might have, such as career progression or job satisfaction.

Douglas McGregor is another theorist who contributed to the human relations movement. McGregor was born in Detroit in 1906 and earned a PhD at Harvard. He taught industrial management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and drew upon his experience as a management consultant in formulating two sharply contrasting sets of assumptions about human nature. Through his own experiences, McGregor realized that there was not enough information about the behaviour of individuals at work.

There are five levels within Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. They include from lowest to highest; physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. For further discussion, see Abraham Maslow, “A Theory of Human Motivation,” Psychological Review 50 (1943), 370-396; and Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York, Harper & Row, 1954).
available to managers at this time. McGregor’s “theory X versus theory Y” approach significantly added to the human relations movement and provided such guidance for managers. Theory X assumptions were of a negative and pessimistic nature and McGregor believed they were typical of how managers traditionally perceive employees.\textsuperscript{77} Theory X managers believe workers are lazy, lack initiative, need direction at all times, and have to be closely watched and monitored.

McGregor formulated theory Y in order to assist managers with breaking this negative tradition. This theory focused on a more positive set of assumptions about individuals in the workplace.\textsuperscript{78} Theory Y managers see individuals as energized, committed, responsible, and creative beings. Both Maslow and McGregor contributed to the human relations movement as they provided managers with options for interacting with different kinds of employees found in any large workplace. Their ideas were popular especially with managers searching for new ways of increasing productivity. Both theories later continue to form part of contemporary management methodologies.

Several academics and managers argued that the human relations movement is somewhat simplistic in that it does not provide managers with a set of concrete actions

\textsuperscript{77} Theory X assumptions include the following: workers dislike their jobs and try to avoid them; workers need to be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to get them to work toward organizational goals; workers want to be directed, they shun responsibility, have little ambition, and seek security above all. For a more detailed discussion, see Douglas McGregor, \textit{The Human Side of Enterprise} (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960).

\textsuperscript{78} Theory Y assumptions include the following: workers do not dislike their work and the physical and mental effort involved in doing this work is natural; workers will exercise self-direction and self-control to reach goals to which they are committed; commitment to goals is a function of the rewards available, especially those that meet self-actualization needs; workers seek out responsibility; workers have the capacity to exercise a great deal of creativity and innovation when solving organizational problems; and the intellectual capacity of workers is under-utilized in organizations. For further explanation, see McGregor, \textit{The Human Side of Enterprise}. 
that will enable them to interact more effectively with employees. A need for a more complex view of the workplace became obvious. This led to the development of the behavioural science approach within behaviour management theory, emphasizing scientific research as the basis for developing theories about human behaviour in organizations. Such research in turn would lead to practical guidelines for managers. Like the three earlier “schools” of classic organizational theory, behavioural science borrows ideas from a multiplicity of disciplines including management, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics. Concepts are tested in organizations and sometimes in laboratories prior to being introduced as viable approaches to managers.

By the mid-twentieth century, classic and modern management theorists brought attention to organizational theory by their concentration on the nature of work and how it fit into building and maintaining an organizational structure. Through their ideas, and indeed the very issues that called forth their research or drew their attention, one can witness the transformation of the organization itself from its classic family or local entrepreneurial roots to much more complex institutions. These institutions, like the theorists that wrote about them, developed sophisticated hierarchies, scientifically structured work processes, and their own organizational cultures, including an increased focus on human relations and worker behaviours. This chapter has thus demonstrated that classic and modern organizations continually reinvented the way they did business, redefined their business functions, and redistributed responsibility and resources in carrying out their mandates and operations, based very much on new research and understandings of internal organizational cultures and employee-manager dynamics as well as on external changes in markets, competition, or law.
The historical study of classic and modern bureaucratic organizations reveals that they transformed themselves from unorganized ad-hoc factories or small family shops to rationalized, well-ordered, large and complex bureaucratic, manufacturing, or transportation firms. A parallel development was occurring in governments as well, as they were transformed from small, limited, regulatory, laissez-faire structures to large, complex, interventionist entities with a vast array of functions and activities. Moreover, the examination of the increased implementation and use of sophisticated technology reveals important challenges and solutions expressed within more modern organizations and their emergent record-keeping systems. Historical perspectives on organizational communication and the history of record-keeping practices in these modern organizations provide a foundation for understanding the contemporary organization of today and how it works. In fact, the argument of this thesis is that these broad structural and managerial changes in organizational work and workplace culture are the critical context that archivists must understand when appraising the records from the information and record-keeping systems of such organizations.

The analysis now turns to a discussion of more recent organizations which will inform an understanding of the creation, use and storage of their records as well as their record-keeping systems, technologies, and practices. The existence of different kinds of records (or their absence), how they are arranged and classified, copied and distributed, communicated and used, are affected – indeed shaped by – all these issues of organizational dynamics. This broad “context” tells the archivist – or should indicate – as much (or more) about the value of records than their subject “content.”
CHAPTER 2

EMERGENCE OF CONTEMPORARY ORGANIZATIONS AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Everyone doing his best is not the answer. It is first necessary that people know what to do. Drastic changes are required. The first step in the transformation is to learn how to change. Long term commitment to new learning and new philosophy is required of any management that seeks transformation. The timid and the faint-hearted, and people that expect quick results, are doomed to disappointment.

W. Edwards Deming¹

The contemporary organization is reinventing the way it does business, redefining its business functions, and redistributing responsibility and resources in carrying out its mandate and operations. In its everyday functioning, an organization interacts with customers, competitors, and sponsors and shareholders, as well as other individuals and organizations that have an immediate influence upon its well-being. The post-1960s networked organization demonstrates greater speed and flexibility in information work, denser connectivity, flatter hierarchies as well as broader organizational participation, reliance on teamwork, and a blurring of organizational boundaries. Within this

contemporary framework, there is reflected a broader contextual environment of cultural, social, political, technological, economic, and demographic factors that shape an organization’s overall functionality, and thus the milieu in which it creates and uses records.

The current revolution in information technology parallels developments during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in many ways. Recent innovations in information processing and communication technologies are inextricably linked to operational changes within the complex networked organization. Moreover, world-wide telecommunication systems such as the Internet provide possibilities for accessing international markets for business corporations and enhancing international contacts for governments, universities, and similar public organizations. Well-established institutional boundaries are now blurred in the face of global networks.

The challenges associated with the sophistication of technology are not, however, the sole cause of operational changes within an organization. Change is also associated with the means through which organizations implement and utilize the sophisticated technology. James Taylor, communications professor at the Université de Montréal, and Elizabeth Van Emery, a Canadian sociologist, argue that “it is a double bind: if managers fail to adapt, they will quickly drop out of the race; if they adapt, their having done so will have changed the world, and they will find themselves in a new environment,” and thus needing to repeat the cycle over and over, without end.2 From such perspectives comes the popular mantra “the only constant is change.” A manager’s ability to foster

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innovative thinking in light of these changes is critical to the success of networked organizations. In this context, the implementation of sophisticated information processing and communication technologies within organizations since the 1960s has gradually produced a radically different form of organization and radically different record-keeping contexts and methodologies, and of course radically different records.

The mid to late twentieth century witnessed a shift from the widespread use of "first generation" to "second generation" computerized information technology within organizations. Organizations in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s introduced punch card tabulators and mainframe computers to support their business functions and work activities that were centralized in information technology departments. As Cook notes, in identifying quantitative needs, these organizations designed among other things, various kinds of computer-based surveys whereby "the completed questionnaires were automated, the results tabulated, the report written, and [then] the project was over."³ The resulting computerized machine-readable data files were relatively simple in terms of their structure and existed independently from each other, in software-neutral formats, and were thus generally called "flat files."

By the 1980s and especially since the 1990s, complex networked businesses, universities, and government bureaucracies, among others, introduced the personal computer wherein every professional worker was considered a computer "end user." Electronic records systems became much more complex in nature, with the introduction of relational databases and complicated software linkages accessed from end users'...
desktops. Within these relational databases, "electronic information is stored in many internal tables, entities or structures that have meaning only inasmuch as they are related to each other." Unlike the simple statistical, machine-readable flat files, second-generation electronic records are revised, added to, and deleted, in some cases, in the course of carrying out business transactions in complex networked organizations, and were almost always very software dependent to be "read" and understood.

Computers in the twenty-first century will differ from those of the late twentieth century in form, memory capacity, and processing speed. CD-ROM technology, high quality digital images, expanding memory and storage capacities of personal computers, as well as greater use of ever-more complex software will shape the way organizations operate. Taylor and Van Emery note the range of uses for software is widening "not just to process data within established frames of reference, but also to provide a tool by means [through] which people can map the complexity of the software dominated world they live in and navigate through it."

In the late twentieth century, these computer systems were filled with useful data. However, a user's ability to access and manipulate this data in meaningful ways was limited. Operating systems forced the user to open up numerous applications while conducting a typical search requiring data from separate systems or data stores such as tables, statistics, maps, graphs, text, scanned bitmaps, video, and sound, the results all to be viewed in separate screens or windows on the desktop computer. Data was cut, pasted, or linked between documents to create a compound document that was not fully integrated. Thus, information was accessed from various applications responsible for the

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4 Cook, "Easy to Byte," 205.
5 Taylor and Van Emery, The Vulnerable Fortress, 16.
creation of files. American information systems specialist, Ronald F. E. Weissman, maintains that a complete reinvention of "user environments and the ways we can manage, interlink, visualize, and interpret information" was necessary in the late twentieth century. Applications will need to communicate with each other in fully integrated ways in the twenty-first century, thus allowing for "the transition from information processing viewed from the perspective of the software application package to information processing viewed from the perspective of a complex document." The challenges for appraising such documents in these organizational environments will be immense.

The twenty-first century will witness the full integration of information processing and global communication technologies. The latter will increasingly become as common to users of the personal computer as communication by telephone was in the twentieth century. Taylor and Van Emery argue that "dense networks of electronic messaging, linking computers through telecommunications, are part of the working infrastructure of all who presume to call themselves 'knowledge workers.'" Computers, office machinery, and telecommunication are merging into one technology operating under an integrated services digital network. Networks are no longer limited internally by the exterior walls of an organization. Rather, networks will increasingly be "linked together by a universal, non-specialized network, independent of organization, which offers configurable networking as an option."

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7 Ibid., 28.
8 Taylor and Van Emery, *The Vulnerable Fortress*, 151.
9 Ibid., 151.
The twenty-first century will also give way to sophisticated information processing technologies. Gregoris Mentzas, Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the National Technical University of Athens, Greece, believes that the introduction of computer-based information systems “exhibit distinct functional characteristics and aim to provide support in separate parts of the organizational environment.”\(^\text{10}\) As well as providing a base during the decision-making process, computer-based information systems provide and maintain support at the individual, group, and organizational level by providing information and communication processing sustenance.

Several types of computer-based systems are typical within complex networked organizations including office information systems. These systems sustain office requirements relating to the creation and storage of documents, procedures, and communications.\(^\text{11}\) Moreover, office information systems bolster organizational learning. The learning organization information system fosters the creation of a corporate memory in an age where technological sophistication has transformed procedural and communication work. Organizations will become much more flexible in the way they operate and communicate in the twenty-first century. As knowledge workers become the norm, organizations will seek to implement information systems that improve overall efficiency. Adrian Williamson, an English information technology specialist, and Constantinos Iliopoulos, professor in the Department of Computing and Information


\(^{11}\) Ibid., 404.
Systems, at the University of Paisley, United Kingdom, believe the learning organization information system will:

- help make recorded information and knowledge retrievable, and individuals with information and knowledge accessible; create opportunities for intelligent (e.g. progressive) archiving and retrieval of organizational information and knowledge (including forgetting); [and] provide electronic playpens for scenario simulations and surfacing of tacit knowledge.\(^\text{12}\)

To stay competitive in the production of unique goods and services, contemporary organizations will increasingly come to rely on the knowledge worker. Williamson and Iliopoulos argue future organizations will benefit because the preservation of organizational culture “has positive consequences for company storage, behavior, and resource management.”\(^\text{13}\) Moreover, learning histories may offer the same benefits. Learning histories are documents that reflect an organization’s story. They are gathered through the compilation of interviews, and are intended to foster better communication and infuse learning within organizations. The histories are handed out in various workshops, discussed in informal and formal settings, and serve as a means through which new ideas and innovation are extrapolated from the knowledge thinkers.\(^\text{14}\)

Although brief and introductory, this examination of the increased implementation and use of sophisticated information technology within complex networked organizations has revealed important and far-reaching changes. However, it also suggests radical transformations in future organizational structure and culture.

\(^\text{13}\) Williamson and Iliopoulos, “The Learning Organization Information System (LOIS),” 38.  
The integration of information processing and communication technologies will have a tremendous impact upon future generations. Networks will allow organizations to connect and perform transactions in a global environment. Taylor and Van Emery maintain that:

telecommunication networked-based services combine information productions, manipulation, and distribution with the use of telecommunications facilities and software facilities [...] including on-line computing services, remote access to databases, [...] and flexible client-specific networks.\textsuperscript{15}

Telecommunication networks will allow an individual to cross boundaries maintained by the hierarchical networks of the past. The establishment of inter-organizational environments through the introduction of sophisticated technology will challenge traditional perceptions about the structure and management of networked organizations and how individuals are trained within it.

Taylor and Van Emery believe that management must adopt an open-door policy toward learning and continual growth. Management "must continue to re-evaluate its own performance and objectives, in a context where change is coming so fast that no one can predict the ultimate outcome of the managerial revolution."\textsuperscript{16} In future, lower-level networks or systems will be built into those above it, including those at the highest level of control. In this new construct, all functions "are situated in a context of complimentary relationships involving giving and taking accomplished by partners in communication."\textsuperscript{17} Taylor and Van Emery argue the concept of supervision must be radically revised in light of the introduction of sophisticated technologies.

\textsuperscript{15} Taylor and Van Emery, \textit{The Vulnerable Fortress}, 152.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 210.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 213.
In future organizations, managers will not supervise the actions of individuals. Rather, they will assess and value the ways in which individuals behave, interpret ideas, and, more importantly, exchange information upon which the organization is built and flourishes. Thus, Taylor and Van Emery conclude that “one is dealing not just with individuals, but with processes. The hierarchy is a structure of conversations, not a ladder of statuses and authority.” Managers should seek to establish organizations built upon the optimization of value-producing potential by concentrating on the interconnectedness of transactions versus individuals involved in transactions. Moreover, managers will need to vary their perceptions as circumstances change.

Managers will continue to be successful according to these new values so long as they actively shape the transactions that make up their networked organizations. They thus need to give the individual worker’s transactions a sense of value by determining the relationship or contextual links between these micro-level operations and the larger value systems upon which their organization is based. Managers must also choose “whether to integrate vertically, by controlling the chain of transactions, perhaps by out-sourcing some value centres, or to integrate horizontally, by joining a value-enhancing partnership with other centres of value creation.” The introduction of sophisticated technology has and will continue to challenge traditional thoughts concerning the structure of organizations and how work is done, individuals are trained, and executives manage. Moreover, the technological challenges and solutions associated with the transformation of contemporary and future organizations will also have a direct impact on the context of

19 Ibid., 222.
the implementation of record-keeping systems and the kinds of users of records in such systems.

**Contemporary Management Theory**

Unlike classic and modern behavioural theorists such as Frederick Taylor, Max Weber, Henri Fayol, and Elton Mayo, as viewed in the last chapter, contemporary management theorists focus on the networked organization and its environment to highlight key boundary transactions that sustain an organization on a daily basis and influence its long-term survival.\(^{20}\) Networked organizations will increasingly require detailed contextual knowledge of their environment as they cross the twenty-first century. The broader contextual environment undoubtedly shapes the overall functionality of an organization, the records-creation process within that organization, and record-keeping systems more generally.

Classic management theorists developed organizational theory by their concentration on the nature of work and how it fit into building and maintaining an organizational structure. During the first part of the twentieth century, theorists such as Hugo Munsterberg, Mary Parker Follett, and Elton Mayo contributed to this theoretical base by focusing on understanding not only the structure and role of the individual within a given organization, but also group behaviour and the important role that group

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\(^{20}\) While classical, behavioural, and quantitative approaches within management theory continue to make contributions to the field, contemporary viewpoints have also emerged. In this thesis “contemporary” is reflective of the view that these theories represent major innovations in ways of currently thinking about management and business work.
interaction plays in organizational performance. The focus was internal, on the organization itself.

Contemporary management theorists such as Henry Mintzberg highlight the role of managers within the post-1960s networked organization or focus more on the interaction between the organization and its external environment. Currently a professor at McGill University in Montreal, Mintzberg devotes himself largely to writing in the areas of managerial work, strategy formation, and forms of organizing. His interest in developing new approaches to management education provided him with an opportunity to conduct various studies concerning leadership roles, characteristics, and behaviour. One such study involved an examination of daily managerial activity, which led him to debunk the popular notion that managers spend long periods in their offices performing quality work. He found this not to be true in well-run networked organizations.21

Mintzberg concludes that managers work at an unrelenting pace. They start working as soon as they arrive at work each morning and continue at a quick pace until they leave late at night. Furthermore, rather than taking actual coffee and lunch breaks, managers usually drink beverages and eat lunch at their desks or during informal and formal meetings.22 He also concludes managers handle a wide variety of issues throughout the course of any given day. Managers spend time dealing with employee issues as well as bidding on multi-million dollar contracts. Many of these activities are also conducted in a brief and efficient manner. About half the activities that Mintzberg recorded are completed in less than nine minutes, while only 10 percent take more than

Managers experience continual interruptions from telephone calls (and now e-mails) and from subordinates, all while handling their taxing workload. Consequently, according to Mintzberg, most managers save activities requiring major thought processes for periods outside of normal work hours.\textsuperscript{24}

Another of Mintzberg’s observations about managerial work methods is that there is a strong preference for verbal communication. Rather than written communication such as memos or formal reports, managers continually choose communication in the form of telephone conversations or meeting dialogue. Managers also rely heavily upon personal networks for obtaining and transmitting information. The network of contacts in Mintzberg’s study includes superiors, peers, subordinates, and other individuals working within the organization, as well as numerous external individuals and groups such as personal friends, professional colleagues and associations, and community activities.\textsuperscript{25}

From his analysis of the various roles managers assume, Mintzberg proposes that managerial behaviour can be grouped into three general types: interpersonal, informational, and decisional roles. Interpersonal roles grow out of the authority of a manager’s position and involve the development and maintenance of positive relationships with other significant people in the institution; informational roles involve receiving and transmitting information so managers can serve as the nerve centres for their organizations; and decisional roles involve making significant decisions that affect the organization.\textsuperscript{26} Mintzberg’s classification of managerial activities into roles sheds

\textsuperscript{23} D.S. Pugh, (ed.), Organizational Theory: Selected Theories (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1985), 419.
\textsuperscript{24} Mintzberg, The Nature of Managerial Work, 35.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 44-48.
\textsuperscript{26} Crainer, The Management Century, 145-147.
light on the work managers actually perform throughout the course of a work day, and the kinds of records they do (and do not) create in carrying out their duties.

Edgar Schein, also a contemporary management theorist, offers another perspective upon which the effective functionality of an organization rests. He hints at the reality that individuals outside of the organization influence the ways in which it functions. Unlike Mintzberg, Schein is not satisfied with a discussion of how the structure, individual behaviour, and group dynamics within an organization affect its functionality, even conceding, as Mintzberg does, that managers search for external sources of knowledge to do their jobs. Schein argues that "in our role as customers, citizens, students, patients, and sometimes victims, we have a stake in understanding and influencing how organizations work and how they make their decisions."27

Organizations are part of a society. As such, they and their managers must anticipate, meet, and certainly appear to conform to the needs and standards of individuals, groups, and institutions in that society. The pressures of a market economy as well as political, social, cultural, environmental, gender, and legal factors, among others, all affect organizational effectiveness. Thus, Schein argues for an approach to organizational effectiveness "which hinges upon good communication, flexibility, creativity, and genuine psychological commitment."28 Organizations comprise individuals who belong to groups within departments or divisions. In turn, the organization belongs to a wider population, such as an industry, existing alongside other groups in a wider organizational economy, society, and ecology. This integrated approach

28 Ibid., 252.
of many complex factors to contemporary management is commonly known as systems theory.

The magnitude of the organizational effort in the Second World War led the American military to implement quantitative methods to facilitate the efficient use of military resources within a larger system of interlinked government and related industry activities. This and other applications of quantitative methods caught the attention of organizations, particularly as these quantitative specialists found jobs in non-military organizations after the war ended. Systems theory uses mathematics, statistics, and information aids to support decision making and organizational effectiveness.29 The systems theory evolved during the postwar era.

The systems theory approach to organizational effectiveness is based on the idea that organizations should be treated as organic, living, interdependent systems. A system can be defined as "a set of interrelated parts that operate as a whole in pursuit of common goals."30 Organizations are established to enable individuals to accomplish more in a group or system than they could as individuals. Systems enable the pooling of talent and ability into an effective whole that reaches desired objectives. This analysis is largely based on work conducted in related disciplines such as biology and the physical sciences.31 Contemporary management theorists, Donde P. Ashmos and George P. Huber, argue that the systems approach is advantageous because systems can be evaluated at

different levels. This can take place at the molecular level up through to systems that consist of two or more societies. Ashmos and Huber maintain that this theory allows managers to assess whether the various parts of an organization that interact for the common good are successful. This approach also demonstrates that changes in one area of the organizational system affect the position of one or many other mutually dependent areas within the same system. Finally, the systems approach focuses on the interaction between the organization and its environment, including directly with customers, clients, and citizens, and more indirectly with society as a whole and its predominant norms and values. Consequently, system thinking at the organizational and functional level can have significant interaction with systems for managing records and information, and the values in such integrated records for archival appraisal.

The external environment of organizations is a contextual factor that exerts influence. A set of conditions exists outside the organization that has a direct impact on the day-to-day functioning of the organization. The two related dimensions of the environment that appear to be the most salient in terms of affecting the basic systems of organizations are the environment’s relative stability versus its instability and the environment’s relative simplicity versus its complexity. These aspects are strongly correlated with the nature and number of existing structured systems within organizations.

In general, relatively stable and simple environments seem to permit, and indeed encourage, the development of highly structured organizations with strong controls and

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tightly specified duties. Conversely, environments which experience uncertainty and unpredictability tend to lead to more fluidly designed organizational systems that de-emphasize structured relationships and rely more on informal non-specified arrangements for coping with operational problems. Thus, different types of environments reflect varying types of organizational systems if they are to remain effective.

Classic and modern management theorists focused on the most productive means of "managing" in a variety of situations. However, theorists began criticizing these approaches as networked organizations became the norm by the end of the twentieth century. Contemporary theorists argue the type of management used within an organization depends on each unique situation. This is otherwise known as contingency theory. Rather than seeking universal principles that apply to all organizational situations, contingency theorists focus on varying principles that highlight the implementation of actions depending on the characteristics of any given situation.33 This theory became increasingly important as organizations continued to witness widespread technological innovation and radical shifts in culture, design, and leadership throughout the latter part of the twentieth century, to say nothing of the radical shift in the external societal context with which organizational systems increasingly interacted.

Contemporary management theorists make the distinction between organization and environment to highlight the key boundary transactions that sustain an organization on a daily basis, and influence its long-term survival. Weber's classical bureaucratic organization is specific in every detail and run in a tightly controlled way by the top

executive through a rigid hierarchy. While this kind of organization once dominated many sectors of society, contemporary organizations are witnessing a transformational process due to changing demands and technological challenges. Computerisation and office automation have pushed organizations to radically rethink their ideas concerning operational as well as managerial requirements. Moreover, the implementation and use of information technologies has had a measurable effect on organizations’ record-keeping systems.

Alfred Chandler’s more recent writings shed light on the evolution of the information economy, the World Wide Web and technological innovation, and the associated record-keeping systems.34 Chandler’s research centres on business, including formal structures and the use of electronic communications and information technology. He argues that any business framework – to be successful – is dependent on the systematic collection, storage, and manipulation of information. According to Chandler, procedures are more important than technological devices when thinking about information-processing innovations. This includes standardization, printed forms, consistent data collection, and reliable record keeping. The adoption of information technology was based on the succession of existing data-processing tools including punch-card tabulators, typewriters, and adding machines, on through to various generations of computers.35 By the 1980s, photocopy machines were linked to phone

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lines so that facsimile (fax) copies could be transmitted around the world with relative ease. These technological innovations not only changed the way organizations conducted their day-to-day operations, but also increased the volume of records created and copied and the very nature of such records.36

Greater speed and flexibility in information work, denser connectivity, flatter and decentralized hierarchies, as well as broader organizational participation, reliance on teamwork, and a blurring of organizational boundaries are the products of an implementation of sophisticated computerized information technology.37 This has undoubtedly shaped contemporary record-keeping systems as well and will influence the way archivists think about appraisal and acquisition policies in the twenty-first century. Millions of documents will be stored locally, rather than in the old centralized registries, and made increasingly accessible through organizational networks. New software for scanning will encompass a broader range of uses, including pattern recognition technologies. Cursive handwriting recognition will become a technology of great value for authenticating documents for future virtual archives. Weissman concludes technology can also significantly improve the range and depth of access to archival holdings, because


36 For a discussion of copying technologies, see Daniel J. Boorstein, The Americans: The Democratic Experience (New York: Random House, 1973), 397-402. Within organizations many hundreds if not thousands of replicas of a record might exist. Chapter 3 of this thesis will provide an analysis of the work facing archivists in identifying "originals" in light of this technology and the impact this has had on the development of appraisal theory and methodology.

of the new metadata that will (or should) be connected to records in these automated office systems.

The integration of search and retrieval tools is important within information systems. Weissman concludes that object-oriented databases should replace electronic filing systems. He notes object databases are designed to "be aware of the retrieval and display methods appropriate to the variety of information stored in the underlying information object database."\(^{38}\) He offers a means of dealing with unstructured information in office systems that is open to varying interpretation. Consequently, cross referencing and information audit trails, as well as good contextual metadata, must make up the information "object." That data "object" is the old record content, plus all this new embedded context, integrated seamlessly. Weissman notes that the shift from traditional applications-oriented architecture to a document (or record "object") and database-centred architecture is such that "bits of information will be uncoupled from the applications that create them and will, as component data, be reusable across a wide spectrum of applications."\(^{39}\) The classic view of one record in one place for one function or transaction has vanished. Multiple views, uses, and functional contexts may surround a "single" record content or subject matter, thus creating virtually multiple records rather than one physical record as an artifact. Once again, the implications for appraisal theory and practice of this transformation are immense.

\(^{38}\) Weissman, "Archives and the New Information Architecture of the Late 1990s," 32.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 32.
Canadian archivist John McDonald discusses the automated office through the examination of the National Archives of Canada’s development of the Information Management Office Systems Advancement project. The project was undertaken to understand the impact of office technology applications on the workplace. The goal was to formulate functional requirements that would provide government managers with guidelines for developing proper retention practices and disposal schedules for electronic textual records.

A prototype of records management software was introduced in the Government Records Branch of the National Archives in the early 1990s. This prototype was available on a local area network (LAN) and its application, available to users through a list of menu options, was located on a file server on the local network. The prototype was assessed by a group of project officers and managers, as well as departmental records management staff. The most important result was an enhanced understanding of the evolution of the use of office system technologies and the need for new approaches to control electronic or digital records in government offices.

As a result, an archivist’s guide was created to facilitate the management of information in user directories and to establish an appreciation of common filing systems in the future. The guide stresses that consistency can be established even in end-user computing when classification is based upon the functions and activities of users. Another guide focuses on the management of group space with the effect of helping “work groups structure their file directories, establish naming conventions, and develop

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40 The National Archives of Canada became the Library and Archives of Canada when it merged with the National Library of Canada in 2004. McDonald’s work focuses on a project that took place within the Government Records Branch at what was then the National Archives of Canada.
retention procedures.” However, McDonald outlines several problems with respect to the solutions currently being formulated by archivists. He argues that the creation of guides for the management of user directories and group space is outside the context of how people conduct their business. He argues that it is more important to define the rules and procedures that guide employees toward proper record-keeping practices in the context of automated business applications. Users should be aware of record-keeping systems, practices, and technologies. McDonald notes that users will develop this awareness when record-keeping systems are situated within their proper and familiar workplace contexts, not the artificial subject-indexing conventions of a remote, centralized records management system of the earlier modern organization. Therefore, these systems should be interwoven within the normal day-to-day business functions and activities of an organization.

Rather than develop a desktop full of icons denoting scores of different software, McDonald argues the desktop of the future should be full of icons denoting the business activities that any given government employee or unit is responsible for performing. Clicking on an icon would result in the provision of a number of options and appropriate forms reflecting the format and rules that a small unit, section, branch, division, or department has decided reflects its mandate and functionality. McDonald notes that the record-keeping “indexing” and controlling activities would automatically happen “behind the screen” because they would be based on these rules and criteria developed by the records manager in consultation with employees, managers, and archivists. Behind that


\[42\] McDonald, “Managing Records in the Modern Office,” 78.
same screen, the separation of documents into archival and non-archival portions could also occur, based on an appraisal decisions focused on analyzing the workplace functions, activities, and transactions being embedded into this same coding or indexing process.

Many current records managers lack the knowledge and abilities required to assume this new role. Many senior managers are not yet convinced that the resources needed to control digital information should be an organizational priority. Asserting control over digital information requires a thorough understanding of what a record is as a "digital object," what it means to create and keep such records, and how to do the research to understand the organizational context that must be expressed and encoded in the metadata (or description) of the records in such systems in order to make the records intelligible in the several or many contexts in which they may be used. Supportive of McDonald's approach, Michel Nelson, a senior information policy manager at the Treasury Board of Canada, is more concerned with the means through which archivists and their colleagues in related information disciplines work together "in support of both the archival and the operational record."43 He argues archivists and other information specialists should be aware of two factors that are shaping all activities undertaken in organizations and the preservation of records in the twenty-first century.

The first factor involves restructuring. It affects activities at the institutional, organizational, and program delivery and administrative renewal level. The record-keeping protocols that accompany these new arrangements should therefore be examined and reflected upon. The second factor involves the individual worker. Individuals receive records electronically, process them, and then pass them on electronically. The routes that

electronic records travel and how they are managed become increasingly important as the traditional records management safeguards associated with paper records disappear.

Moreover, he argues most employees lack the knowledge of proper records management skills and tools. In local area network-based record-keeping systems, the individual is responsible for the organization and deletion of electronic records. Emerging individual end-user record-keeping systems create a cluttered environment as records are “scattered all over the cyberspace landscape”\(^4\) and as employees keep many duplicates. More importantly, Nelson examines the consequences associated with the casual deletion of records.

Nelson uses the example of electronic mail messages in contemporary organizations. E-mails are sent from person to person and an ongoing dialogue is established. These transactions may exist in several different record-keeping systems and lead to the accumulation of duplicated records. Moreover, Nelson considers the way multiple attachments change the record and the implications associated with their reinvention as these are forwarded on, perhaps revised, to other recipients. Nelson concludes that archivists and other information technologists must assume the role of caregivers in light of multiple email systems, portable computers, and electronic organizers. Records are scattered across the virtual organizational landscape, often duplicated, written over or altered by additional users, and stored on hard drives that are erased when computers are assigned to new users. He notes there should be cooperation between “libraries, documentation centres, records offices, archival data centres, and

database management." Once established, this team can effectively develop the principles of systems-based “behind the screen” information management that eventually translates into systems design to control electronic records in a trustworthy and efficient manner.

The records of contemporary and future organizations described above challenge the traditional view of organizations as agencies that create and maintain static records and that the original meaning of records as defined by its first creator remains fixed. Complex networked organizations rely on ever-shifting collaborations reflecting impermanent and changing structures. Records are also dynamic rather than static entities, as numerous layers of contextual meaning are continually added to the record every time it is viewed, used, or modified – a kind of ongoing history of the record. Collaborations in short-term working groups or teams complicate the appraisal of records. The meaning of a record using group software tools changes over time as it is re-invented, reshaped, revised within the group, which itself is also a very transient “structure,” disappearing when its task is done.46

It is clear that organizations are reinventing the way they do business, redefining their functions, and redistributing responsibility and resources in carrying out their mandates and operations. Weissman, McDonald, Bearman, and Cook, among many others, argue preserving access to records of continuing value is of the utmost importance. However, the development of new record-keeping systems has threatened the integrity of records, especially those in electronic format. Archivists should consider

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45 Ibid., 86.
46 Peter Botticelli, “Records Appraisal in Network Organizations,” Archivaria 49 (Spring 2000), 166.
further forging alliances with other disciplines in an attempt to define and implement reliable and trustworthy record-keeping systems. Terry Cook offers the following conclusion:

All these new and complex computerized formats, until controlled, standardized, and linked to business processes, threaten decision-making accountability and the long-term corporate memory of records creators, especially when joined with a telecommunications revolution affecting the transmission and interconnectivity of this electronic information.47

Contemporary management theorists bring new meaning to organizational theory by their concentration on a broader contextual environment reflecting cultural, social, political, technological, economic, and demographic factors that shape an organization’s overall functionality. This chapter has found that organizations continually reinvent the way they do business, redefine their business functions, and redistribute responsibility and resources in carrying out their mandates and operations, based on an understanding of internal and external organizational cultures and organizational communication systems as much as by employee-manager dynamics. The major developments and shifts in thinking about the culture of organizations undoubtedly influence the development and management of record-keeping systems.

Increasingly, structural, managerial, technological, and communication changes in work and culture form the critical context that archivists should consider when appraising the records from the information and record-keeping systems of contemporary organizations. And so, the discussion now shifts to the traditional, modern, and contemporary appraisal theories that reflect certain assumptions and understanding (or

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lack thereof) about the nature and functions of classic, modern, and contemporary organizations.
CHAPTER 3

TRADITIONAL, MODERN, AND CONTEMPORARY

APPRaisal THEORY AND THE ORGANIZATION

Archivists have generally viewed the beginning point of their work as being appraisal, the identification and selection of records with continuing value... Appraisal generally has focused on the broad values of evidence and information or concentrated on the values of administrative, fiscal, legal, and research uses. This perspective tells us more about the limitations of how archivists have approached this part of their responsibility, as many archivists have seen their task to be to assist scholars and research. There has been a remarkable shift in attitudes and ideas about archival appraisal within the last two decades. While it is impossible to capture briefly all of the nuances associated with the shifting ideas about appraisal, the most salient point is to understand how appraisal is most often associated with both the mandates for the creation of records and with the elemental functions of any organizations.

Richard J. Cox

Previous chapters of this thesis demonstrate that the new contemporary organizational theory differs from classic and modern organizational theory by its emphasis on informal cultural and communication patterns rather than on formal structures and official mandates. This chapter explores how archival thinking about

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organizations, in regard to the appraisal of their records,² mirrors the qualitative transformation of the organization from its origins until the twenty-first century. As seen in Chapters 1 and 2, historical perspectives on the organization – its structure, communication patterns, and record-keeping practices – provide a foundation for understanding the contemporary organization and how it works, as well as informing an understanding of the contemporary organization’s record-keeping systems and practices. To address the gap between actual organizational culture and its perception by archivists, this chapter will analyze the implications for archival appraisal of views of leading archivists on how organizations function and how they create and use records. As will be seen through the writings of contemporary appraisal theorists, managerial and cultural theory about organizations has come to inform some approaches to making appraisal decisions concerning which records to keep and destroy, allowing in turn for more efficient and effective records disposition within complex networked organizations – consisting of more flexible, fluid, and in some cases, virtual organizations exhibiting flatter hierarchies and intricate internal computer-based communication linkages – and those of the future. Yet some of the nuances of organizational theory already discussed have not yet been incorporated into appraisal theory.

The nature of modern bureaucracy is not only studied by organizational theorists, but also by traditional and modern appraisal theorists, all of whom wrestle with issues involving the structure of organizations, their work methods, and their record-keeping processes. An overview of the writings of traditional and modern archival appraisal

² This scope of the thesis is limited to the analysis of European, North American, and Australian writers whose works are available in English-language sources and whose focus is on the appraisal of organizational records.
Theorists including Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin, Hilary Jenkinson, Theodore R. Schellenberg, Margaret Cross Norton, and Maynard Brichford reveals the usually unquestioned assumptions in their writings about the nature of organizations. These assumptions reflect, sometimes unconsciously, some of the characteristics of the classic and modern organization as outlined in Chapter 1.

**Traditional Appraisal Theory**

To understand the ideas of traditional archival appraisal theorists and how their work contributed to a more astute understanding of early modern record-keeping systems and practices, suggests one must appreciate the historical context in which these theorists flourished. Hugh Taylor, former Provincial Archivist of Alberta, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, as well as former director of the Archives Branch at the National Archives of Canada, noted, "Above all, [appraisal theorists] wrote from their own very different archival traditions and this should always be taken into account." Traditional, modern, and contemporary theorists alike benefit from the archival traditions of their respective countries. The Dutch archivists Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin were first to publish a book concerning archival theory and methodology in 1898, codifying archival professional ideas that evolved in Europe in the nineteenth century.

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4 Archives existed in various forms for centuries as identified and briefly discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. However, Muller, Feith, and Fruin's *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* was the first influential archival work reaching many archivists through French, German, English, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese, and other translations. For thoughtful discussion of the development of Dutch archival theory and practice and its codification in Muller, Feith,
principles articulated in their *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* became the foundation for traditional, modern, and contemporary archival theory and practice, albeit radically reinterpreted to new conditions. However, Muller, Feith, and Fruin’s manual completely ignores the appraisal and selection functions – its main focus is the arrangement and description of archival records.

It is important to consider the organizations contemporary to the Dutch archivists at the time the manual was written. Nineteenth-century organizations reflected in the classic Weberian model were assumed to be run in a tightly controlled way by the chief executive. The volume of records was still relatively small; the records were centrally and carefully organized; and all were deemed to be important and thus to have archival value. Muller, Feith, and Fruin noted that archives are “the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials” and that this first principle or rule was the “foundation upon which everything must rest.” As such, the main problem the Dutch archivists faced was the arrangement and description of these records, not their appraisal. The manual offers other principles in light of this, including rules 8 and 16: distinct records “must be kept carefully separate” and not mixed with the archival records of other creating entities in artificially arranged groupings. The arrangement of archives “must be based on the original organization of the archival collection, which in the main corresponds to the organization of the administrative body that produced it.”

In other words, the two founding principles underlying all archival theory and practice, provenance and original

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order, were clearly articulated by the Dutch archivists in 1898, and both make a close connection between records and the organization that created them.

The manual’s title reflects its focus on arrangement and description. As Terry Cook notes, the manual “is about government, public, or corporate records and their orderly transfer to archival repositories to preserve their original order and classification” and is based on “experience the authors had either with limited numbers of medieval documents susceptible to careful diplomatic analysis or with records found in well organized departmental registries with stable administrations.” Muller, Feith, and Fruin believed that the nature and order of an archive must mirror the internal structure of the creating organization and of the record-keeping system that produced it. The assumptions that the Dutch archivists held concerning centrally organized and stable records, produced within the hierarchical and tightly controlled organizational structures of nineteenth-century organizations, undoubtedly shaped the development of their archival theory and practice.

The Dutch manual was relatively new when the future English archival theorist, Hilary Jenkinson, was hired by the Public Records Office (PRO) in 1906. Initially, Jenkinson worked extensively with British medieval records, which he frequently referred to later in his Manual of Archive Administration, first published in 1922. He eventually became the Deputy Keeper of the PRO from 1947 to 1954. Jenkinson’s early work with medieval records shaped his views on archival theory and practice. In order to...

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6 Cook, “What is Past is Prologue,” 21.
work with medieval records, he studied paleography and diplomatics. He explored generalized concepts concerning the nature, character, properties, and uses of individual records or documents. This facilitated an archival focus on the evidential nature or organic character of records. As Richard Stapleton noted, “it is not surprising then, that Jenkinson’s archival writings concentrate on the development of rigid fundamentals with an emphasis on the legal character of archives.”

During the Middle Ages, families and monarchs organized themselves politically, planned military actions, and controlled trade across regional empires. However, parchment was scarce and very expensive. Paper was introduced in the Near East by the ninth century, but was not commonplace in Europe until the twelfth century and was not widely used in England until the early fourteenth century. Records created during this period were given to the church for safekeeping since most monarchs did not have a permanent residence. It has been noted, however, that “as the residences of monarchs became fixed and the scope of their administration expanded, secular archives

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8 Terry Eastwood, Chairman of the Master of Archival Studies Programme in the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia, has written on the topics of archival education and archival theory and practice more generally. He asserts a neo-Jenkinsonian view that all documents reflect the circumstances within which they are originally created and used. The meaning or value of the record is reflected in the original circumstances and consequences of records creation. Eastwood argues use provides the empirical basis for appraisal. He believes archives should not be viewed as things created for posterity. Value is reflected in the projection of a record from past to present and future use. See his “How Goes it with Appraisal?” Archivaria 36 (Autumn 1993), 111-121. For an interesting discussion of diplomatics and its focus on the form, structure, and authorship of documents, especially in electronic environments, see Luciana Duranti, “Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science,” Archivaria 28 (Summer 1989), 7-27 and “Reliability and Authenticity: The Concepts and Their Implications,” Archivaria 39 (Spring 1995), 5-10; and Heather McNeil’s “Weaving Provenancial and Documentary Relations,” Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992), 192-198.

Effective record-keeping systems were established when small-scale management processes penetrated more formalized political, commercial, and religious units in England. As a result, Jenkinson did not have to concern himself with the problem of dealing with a massive amount of organizational records in his early years as an archivist with the PRO. With such a background, it was natural that Jenkinson supported, elaborated on, and popularized into English the ideas of Dutch archivists Muller, Feith, and Fruin.

Jenkinson argued that archival records are evidence of acts and transactions and that the archivist’s role is to preserve authentic evidence. Like the Dutch archivists, he believed records are the organic, natural, unself-conscious by-products of organizational administration. As such, the appraisal of records is not an appropriate activity because divorcing the selected records from the organic whole would violate the basic archival principle of respecting the fonds. As Terry Cook notes,

The exercise of ‘personal judgment’ by the archivist, as Jenkinson knew any appraisal must necessarily involve, would tarnish the impartiality of archives as evidence, [as of course] would any consideration of saving archives to meet actual or anticipated uses of records by historians or other researchers.\(^{11}\)

Although the increased production of records during and after the First World War sparked an interest in appraisal theory and gave Jenkinson a perspective that the Dutch archivists did not have, he never completely accepted that archivists should

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appraise and select archival records. Jenkinson’s response to the increasing amounts of records was that the creator of the records must be responsible for “the selection and destruction of his [or her] own documents....”  

Like the Dutch archivists, Jenkinson believed that archivists should be record “keepers” and that the selection and destruction of records should be left to the creator. The latter must be based upon practical administrative concerns of the creating organization rather than future needs of researchers, thus ensuring the impartiality and authenticity of archives. It is only then that the records “reach their final arrangement, by a natural process; [they] are a growth; almost, you might say, as much an organism as a tree or animal.”

The ordered stability and central hierarchical control of the Weberian organizations contemporary to Jenkinson doubtless reassured him that these administrators would know and choose the best records to survive as archives. Jenkinson notes that, “so long as the administrative or executive office discharged by the original owner of the Archives continues to function, so long may this ‘Administrator’ be considered to be undying.”  

Weber’s formulation regarding the distinctive attributes of bureaucratic organizations – that is, rational and rule-bound institutions – is reflected in Jenkinson’s own ideas concerning the formation of an archive.

Modern Appraisal Theory

American archivist Gerald Ham recently commented on Jenkinson’s appraisal theory: “Allowing the creator to designate what should be the archival record solves the problems of complexity, impermanence, and volume of contemporary records by ignoring them.”15 Unlike their Dutch and English counterparts, American archivists acknowledged the problems associated with traditional appraisal theory in light of the increasing amount and complexity of contemporary organizational records. It is important to consider the organizations that modern appraisal theorists, including Theodore R. Schellenberg, Margaret Cross Norton, and Maynard Brichford, witnessed at the time they were formulating appraisal strategies and methodologies.

In the early stages of their profession’s development, American archivists inherited a shocking backlog of public records. In 1934, the National Archives was established and immediately had in its custody more than 1.2 million cubic metres of federal records. By the end of the Great Depression, the accumulation rate reached 160,000 metres annually. This occurred in part due to the expansion of the federal government in response to interventionist New Deal policies, designed to cope with the depression. Moreover, this crisis was exacerbated when the federal government expanded again to support the United States’ efforts during the Second World War. By 1943, the growth rate of federal records reached 650,000 metres annually.16 Archivists were under growing pressure to manage the historical record with limited resources in an age when a

copious amount of paper was being produced by organizations now fully modern in character. In addition to the immense volume of records, the records associated with particular business activities were no longer confined to an individual office within a single organization, but were created by multiple units and many individuals. The redundancy of information in modern records was such that they “resemble[d] more the noise and distortions of a badly tuned television set than useful information.”¹⁷ The resulting records and record-keeping systems for most government offices during this period were a reactive by-product of the activities of expanding governments instead of planned, well-managed exercises in their own right.

By the mid-twentieth century, therefore, governments had been transformed from small, limited, regulatory, laissez-faire structures to large, complex, interventionist agencies, with a vast array of functions and activities managed in increasingly significant ways. These broad structural and managerial changes in organizational work and culture influenced the writings of American appraisal theorists who were tasked with appraising the records from the record-keeping systems of such modern organizations, as opposed to the scarce documentary legacies from medieval or monarchical institutions that faced the traditional nineteenth-century archival theorists and on through to Jenkinson.

By the middle of the twentieth century, some leading American archivists focused on coming to terms with these massive amounts of records and the complicated government functions and activities that produced them. In 1944, Margaret Cross Norton, the state Archivist of Illinois, stated that “it is obviously no longer possible for any

agency to preserve all records which result from its activities. The emphasis of archives
work has shifted from preservation of records to selection of records for preservation.”18
Philip C. Brooks, an archivist at the National Archives in Washington, suggested four
years earlier, that the appraisal function “can best be performed with a complete
understanding of the records than after they have lain forgotten and deteriorating for
twenty years.”19 This is in complete contrast to Jenkinson, who believed archivists should
not be involved with active records in any way, but rather remain passive “keepers” of
those archives passed on to them by others to ensure that the authenticity of records is
preserved. Yet without active appraisal of records in a timely fashion by archivists and
the accompanying destruction of most of the records, the postwar era would be buried in
outdated records. This society recorded more information than it needed beyond often a
very short period of time, and much of it, as seen already, was highly repetitive,
duplicates or ephemera, and therefore not necessary to maintain for any length of time in
agencies and certainly not in archives.

In light of the nature of the modern bureaucratic organization, American
archivists introduced a new concept. They developed the “life cycle of records” model
whereby archivists interact with the records from their creation to their final disposition.
Within this model, records are created and used in the course of conducting day-to-day
business in their active phase. Records are then stored offsite for infrequent use by the
creating office for a given period of time, the dormant phase. Finally, when their active
and dormant operational phases have ended, the records are selected by archivists, not by

Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archives and Records Management
19 Philip C. Brooks, "The Selection of Records for Preservation," American Archivist 3 (October
1940), 226.
Jenkinson's administrators, as having either archival value and transferred to an archives, or no archival value and destroyed. Norton argued that this "increase[es] efficiency and further ensure[es] that archival records are not lost before reaching their final destination, the archives."20

American archivists gradually became familiar with records management in addition to traditional archival theory and practice and historical scholarship, as they developed a closer relationship with the records over the entire course of their life cycle. The life-cycle model enabled archivists to participate in the selection of records, albeit only after records passed through the final stage of the life cycle and then only in concert with the selection of records for destruction. Yet, there soon developed a partnership between records managers and archivists in light of their common interests with regard to records and thus began an increasingly close and symbiotic relationship between the two professions.21 The often dual role in smaller organizations of a single person as both archivist and records manager meant that the management of records and the administration of archives were done simultaneously.22 The drive behind modern records management as it emerged in the mid-twentieth century was clearly part of the culture of the modern organization – to approach all work scientifically, efficiently, and systematically, including the work of managing records.

Theodore R. Schellenberg, the leading modern American (and indeed world) appraisal theorist at that time, emphasized that archivists must concern themselves with records management. He noted that “all of the archivist’s problems in arranging, describing, appraising, and servicing public records arise out of the way in which such records are handled in government offices.” In contrast to the European tradition, which focused on “the guardianship of the evidential properties of a totality of records,” American archivists were now charged with “appraising records to uncover their value for the purpose of selecting specific records for permanent preservation as archives.”

While some modern American appraisal theorists reflected upon the connection between records managers and archivists, Schellenberg also focused on the nature of the modern organization and the importance of its documentation, when considering the appraisal function. He is the first theorist to discuss the importance of documenting the organization. He is also among the first to understand that to do archival work such as appraisal with institutional records, archivists must understand how organizations function, since records are defined by, flow from, and are connected to organizational work processes and activities. In 1956, Schellenberg gathered together his ideas regarding the selection and appraisal of government records, as well as those of some of his colleagues at the National Archives, and articulated a full statement of appraisal criteria for government records in his manual on archival theory and practice, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*.


Schellenberg asserted that European archival traditions were unrealistic when dealing with modern records in the United States and indeed elsewhere in the modern world. He agreed with many principles that the Europeans had established, including the notion that the significance of archives lay in the organic nature of records and respecting their provenance. Moreover, he upheld the principle of original order and agreed with Jenkinson that records are created unself-consciously in the course of conducting daily business. However, he noted that Jenkinson’s argument that “records should be kept in their entirety without mutilation, alteration or unauthorized destruction of portions of them”25 must only apply to the active phase of the life cycle. The increasing volume of records produced in large industrial or bureaucratic organizations pushed Schellenberg to come to terms with problems inherent in European traditional appraisal theory.

Schellenberg developed the notion of “value” when thinking about the appraisal of modern public records. He asserted their appraisal could be accomplished by applying a taxonomy that assumes primary and secondary values. If records are of ongoing importance to their creator, they reflect “primary” values. If records are potentially valuable to researchers subsequent to their administrative use, they reflect “secondary” values. Primary values relate to the degree to which “records served their creators’ ongoing operational needs.” Secondary values reflect “the importance of records for secondary research by subsequent users, not primary use by their original creator.”26

Primary value mirrors Jenkinson’s principle that the responsibility for identifying records with archival value rested with the records creators or “administrators,” although it relates only to the active and dormant phases of the life cycle and not the archival or

25 Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 15.
26 Cook, “What is Past is Prologue,” 27.
final phase of the life cycle as Jenkinson asserted. Further subdivided into two categories, Schellenberg’s secondary value, which was his overwhelming emphasis on what the archivist would appraise, consists of evidential value and informational value.

Evidential value emphasizes the value of “records because of the evidence they contain of organization and function” of the government body that creates them, while informational value stresses the value of “records because of the information they contain” on “persons, things, or phenomena” with which the government body deals. Schellenberg argued that archivists must appraise records through the identification of evidential value because this facilitates the acquisition of a small number of records reflecting the structure and function of a given organization and thus would not only be of benefit to the researcher, but the organization itself. The records most worthy of retention containing evidential value are those which record the origin of the office, represent the organizational structure, and document the organization’s functions and activities.

To assess the evidential value of records, Schellenberg noted that archivists must understand the position of each office within the administrative hierarchy of an organization, the functions performed by the offices, and the activities carried out by the office. Given the problematic status of the huge volumes of postwar government records discussed above, Schellenberg argued that archivists must shift their appraisal mindset from quantity to substance. He believed that it is critical for the archivist to understand

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the structure of modern organizations and the relationship between the structure and the records generated, in order to accurately identify the records selected to form an archive.

Schellenberg also stressed that records must be appraised on the basis of their informational value. This notion is very different from Jenkinson’s view of appraisal. When appraising the informational value of government records, Schellenberg argued that archivists need not concern themselves with documenting the creating body, only with the subject content that the records contained about people, places, activities, and ideas. Records, in this case, could be appraised piecemeal, at least in relation to other records created by the organization. When evaluating whether records should be archived based on their informational value, “the federal archivist should consider whether the same or similar information is available in other forms or places.” According to Schellenberg, “the records universe is not limited to the physical records of the generating agency, but includes any source or agency that contains the data.”

Schellenberg viewed the function of appraisal as an opportunity to reduce the volume of records while also serving the needs of academic researchers. He argued that record managers should determine evidential values, in consultation with agency officials, while archivists would determine informational values. However, archivists “should have final responsibility” in both cases and “should be empowered to review all records that government agencies propose to destroy.”

Schellenberg adopted more fully Weber’s notion of the organization as a steep hierarchical pyramid under the strict control of a chief executive and this is reflected in

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29 Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 30, 32.
his discussion of the nature of the modern organization, its activities, and its public records. According to Schellenberg, the executive branch of government is presided over by a chief officer and controls numerous agencies that operate beneath it. He acknowledged that the modern organization was becoming increasingly complex in light of the characteristics inherent in a rapidly growing American government during the 1940s and 1950s. Schellenberg observed the following regarding the complexity of modern bureaucratic organizations:

In the executive branch of the government a pyramid-like structure has arisen, with its apex in the offices of the President and its base in a multitude of field offices. This structure has been made more complex in its organization and functioning by certain characteristics that are inherent in the American form of government; e.g., the system of checks and balances under which the legislative branch reviews the functioning of the executive; and the two-party system, under which governmental organization is responsive, to a degree at least, to periodic changes of program and policy. In general, as government activities are expanded, they become more highly specialized.30

As government activities expanded during the postwar era, they became increasingly specialized. According to Schellenberg, this led to the creation of more complex records stored in a variety of record-keeping systems. Gradually, simple alphabetical and numerical filing systems were replaced by more complex systems such as subject-numeric filing systems. To complicate things further, there was no uniformity in the filing systems employed from office to office within an agency, and from agency to agency within a particular branch, division or department. Moreover, all of these systems were applied differently across government.

30 Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 36-37.
According to Schellenberg, the important work was done by executives and senior managers in setting policy, making decisions, and determining directions, all in the top 1 or 2 percent of the Weberian organizational pyramid. All records from these senior offices should be kept, therefore, as archives. The next 8 or 10 percent down the triangle were the professionals who supported managers – researchers, policy analysts, program evaluators, auditors, and so on. Some of their records would be preserved in archives. The bottom 85 percent of the triangle were the routine, daily transactions, the local activities, the administration of individual cases and projects. Virtually none of these records should be kept. The citizen’s interaction with the state was largely ignored therefore. As with Weber, for Schellenberg the power was at the top, which is where important things happened, where important records would be found. These are the records of evidential value for archives.

Schellenberg’s writings reflect Max Weber’s ideas concerning the bureaucratic management approach to organizations and classic and modern management theory more generally. As seen, Weber’s approach emphasizes the need for a systematic, rational view of organizational structure based on sociological theories of bureaucracy. That is what Schellenberg mirrored when he advised archivists on the kind of research necessary to understand organizations in order to determine evidential values.

When Weber’s work was translated into English in the 1940s, many managers in the United States found his ideas useful in considering how organizations could be more effectively managed, including Schellenberg in terms of managing records and archives; indeed, records management more generally fit very much into these new outlooks. In Schellenberg’s case, Weber’s ideas are not implicitly acknowledged but they are reflected
in his assumptions about the nature of organizations. Schellenberg is the first archivist to suggest that the nature of organizations must be considered when formulating appraisal theory and practice. Michael Lutker, a recent archivist, contends that the work of organizational theorists such as Max Weber enables archivists to view records "more perceptively and to understand the multitude of organizational, social, and environmental factors that shape the records." 31

Several of Schellenberg’s successors continued to emphasize the informational value of records. Indeed this became the defining characteristic of most archival appraisal methodologies from the 1940s toward the end of the 1980s. Appraisal was largely guided by the anticipated use of the records by researchers, especially academic historians. For example, Meyer H. Fishbein, an archivist with the National Archives and Records Service in the 1960s and 1970s, argued that trends in historiography must be considered when appraising and selecting records. 32 In 1977, Maynard J. Brichford wrote the first appraisal manual for the Society of American Archivists that likewise emphasized the importance of informational value based on the anticipated research trends. However, in this seminal publication, he also outlined characteristics and other values that reflect an understanding and documentation of the bureaucratic organization.

According to Brichford’s theory of appraisal, records contain functional, evidential, and informational characteristics as well as administrative, research, academic, and archival values. He argued that archivists must consider all of these values.

characteristics and values as they appraise the records of organizations. Brichford stressed that each record has a procedural, documentary, or authoritative function usually reflected in the record’s title. He developed categories for organizational records based on record type: some are valuable and worth preserving, including board minutes and records documenting policy decisions; others are seldom valuable, such as routine administrative records. Their functionality provides archivists with an initial indication of their significance in reflecting the activities of organizations.

Moreover, Brichford noted that records often contain evidence of the “organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities”\textsuperscript{33} of the office that produced them. Archivists must understand the structure of the organization that produced the records and the business activities and transactions that result in the creation of the records, if they are to appraise them properly. This is in concert with Schellenberg’s notion that archivists must be aware of the position of an office within its organizational hierarchy, the functions carried out in offices across the organization, and the activities performed as a result of the various offices’ assigned functions. According to Brichford, archivists must seek “to explain the activities of the creating organization...by preserving records of policy decisions, records which reflect the functions of the organization, ...and which are representative of a significant range of institutional...activities.”\textsuperscript{34} Here again, like Schellenberg, Brichford’s rhetoric emphasized the policy and senior upper-level records of Weber’s administrative hierarchy as being the most valuable in the appraisal of evidential value.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 5.
Brichford outlined several values that archivists should incorporate into the appraisal of organizational records. Administrative value reflects the worth placed upon the record by the creator in carrying out various activities, signifying its short-term value. It also reflects the value placed upon the record by various users including historians and academics, signifying its long-term value. Moreover, research value reflects Brichford’s notion that the records of greatest significance to broader public research should form part of the archive. Norton maintained that “the difference between a file clerk and an archivist is that the archivist has a sense of perspective. He knows that these documents have two phases of use: their present day legalistic use, and their potential historical value.”

Brichford drew the same conclusion as Norton but also stressed that the archivist should apply broader public research needs to determine the record’s future usefulness without discriminating between “those who are tracing ancestors, seeking to determine legislative intent, looking for debtors, investigating human behaviour, writing a freshman theme, or analyzing executive action in a foreign policy crisis.” In this instance, Brichford argued that archivists must accommodate a broader group of secondary users than the academic user identified by Schellenberg or Norton. Finally, he concluded that the archival value of records is determined after the identification of administrative and research values. With a complete understanding of why records are created, their

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36 Brichford, Archives and Manuscripts, 10. American archivist Gerald Ham commented on Fishbein’s and Brichford’s appraisal theories based, in part, upon research-driven archives. He argued archivists became too closely tied to the research interests of academics and historians and that the “archivist will remain at best nothing more than a weathervane moved by the changing winds of historiography.” See Gerald Ham, “The Archival Edge,” in Daniels and Walch, (eds.), A Modern Archives Reader, 329.
characteristics, and their usefulness to the creator and the public at large, the archivist is able to make an informed decision regarding the preservation of records in the archive.

Through Norton’s discussion of the Illinois state government and the organization of its agencies, it becomes clear that her ideas reflect Weber’s structured and highly centralized organization which links professional administrators with authoritative and decision-making responsibilities and thus, situates power at the apex of the hierarchical pyramid. Like Weber’s theory of management, Brichford and Norton’s appraisal strategies honour the hierarchical nature of the modern organization’s structure. They stressed that appraisal necessitates an understanding of an organization’s administrative hierarchy, especially its senior executives’ use of power to direct the organization’s most important activities. This is achieved by “reading administrative histories, reviewing statutes and administrative regulations governing office operations, studying the organizational charts and manuals, inspecting budget documents and published reports, and flow-charting procedures that result in the creation of records.”37 Like Schellenberg, his successors do not explicitly acknowledge Weber’s ideas in their appraisal strategies. Rather, their strategies reflect more implicitly their assumptions about the nature of organizations and, ultimately, the view that a large portion of the archival records can be found in offices situated at the top of the hierarchy.

Schellenberg, Norton, and Brichford made significant contributions to the development of archival appraisal theory. Yet their modern ideas, like their more traditional precursors, are not beyond criticism. While studying the organization, modern organizational theorists focused their attention on human behaviour in addition to

37 Brichford, Archives and Manuscripts, 13.
organizational structure and hierarchy. Behaviour management theorists including Munsterberg, Follett, and Mayo concluded that employees were more than just mechanisms of production and built specific theories about behaviour in organizations that provided practical guidelines for managers. Their theories demonstrate that management is not solely responsible for how effective and efficient an organization is — workers at various levels within the hierarchy also contribute to the overall success of an organization. However, modern appraisal theorists missed this completely, and thus the records that they preserved as archives reflect a very different view of those organizations than existed in reality, or as modern management theorists who studied these organizations witnessed.

By the mid-twentieth century, classic and modern management theorists brought attention to organizational theory by their concentration on the nature of work and its management, and on the impact of new office technologies and communication tools, and how these fit into building and maintaining the modern organization. This section has explored how modern archival thinking about organizations, in relation to the appraisal of their records, mirrors the qualitative transformation of the modern organization from the early twentieth century until the 1960s. It also documents the implications for archival appraisal of views on how the modern organization functions and how it creates and uses its own institutional records. The perspectives of contemporary organizational theorists concerning institutional power, hierarchy, and functionality are often more directly reflected in the assumptions of archival appraisal theorists regarding what is most important to document and preserve in the archives of those organizations.
American archivist Harold E. Thiele, Jr. recently commented on contemporary appraisal theories and the Electronic Age:

As the tsunami of technology surges forward, efforts are being made to understand the changes and consequences of the computer revolution. These changes are calling into question many of the traditional [and modern] assumptions archivists and records managers use to appraise and classify records.\(^{38}\)

Increasingly complex networked organizations threatened the established Schellenbergian practice of modern appraisal by the end of the twentieth century, making it necessary for archivists to explore and implement new appraisal theories facilitating the identification and capture of records of enduring value. As outlined in Chapter 2, the implementation of sophisticated computerized information processing and communication technologies within organizations since the 1960s has gradually produced a radically different form of organization and thus similarly different record-keeping contexts and methodologies. The records of complex networked organizations challenge the traditional view of archives as agencies that preserve static records from stable, hierarchical organizations and the original meaning of records as defined by their creators.

The study of networked organizations is not only the focus of recent organizational theorists, but also of contemporary appraisal theorists, all of whom wrestle with issues involving the complexity, volume, and very nature of virtual and digital

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records and their record-keeping systems. An overview of the writings of contemporary archival appraisal theorists including Gerald Ham, Hans Booms, Helen Samuels, Hugh Taylor, Terry Cook, David Bearman, Sue McKemmish, and Frank Upward reveals their assumptions about the nature of the complex networked organizations from which archival records originate. Unlike traditional and modern appraisal theorists, their contemporary assumptions reflect more explicitly some of the characteristics of the complex networked organization, as outlined in Chapter 2. These theorists recognize (to varying degrees) that managerial and cultural theory about complex networked organizations ought to inform appraisal decisions concerning which records to keep and which to destroy, allowing in turn for more efficient and effective records disposition within contemporary and future organizations. In this way, they try to address some of the gaps in understanding organizations (and their records) that Schellenberg and his contemporaries missed with their Weberian hierarchical filter.

Records are increasingly difficult to locate because networked organizations rely on "collaborations" reflecting impermanent and changing structures. Interested in the history of technology and business as well as the records and record-keeping systems of complex networked organizations, American appraisal theorist Peter Botticelli notes that "collaborations are informal, decentralized associations which act independently from existing lines of authority. They are central to network structures in which responsibility for completing tasks is widely distributed across organizational boundaries."39 As noted earlier in Chapter 2, organizations are increasingly informal and unstructured in the course of their daily work activities. Work processes rising out of business functions and

39 Peter Botticelli, "Records Appraisal in Network Organizations," Archivaria 49 (Spring 2000), 185.
responsibilities are widely distributed across organizational boundaries. With their vertical and hierarchical Weberian assumptions, traditional and modern appraisal theories, can no longer be relied upon, therefore, to identify the records that should be kept for long-term preservation as twenty-first century complex networked organizations and records, increasingly in electronic form, become the norm.

Recent trends in thinking about appraisal (and other archival functions) have paid far greater attention to the context of records creation. New appraisal approaches, such as documentation strategy, functional analysis, and macroappraisal, base appraisal decisions on the dynamic context of records creation. In addition to archival expertise and an appropriate framework (or the practical steps that support appraisal and include the process for implementing a plan or model), archivists are formulating theories of value based on researching the institutions, persons, functions, activities, and events which give rise to the creation of records. As Canadian archival educator Barbara L. Craig noted in 1992, archivists are revising appraisal processes to include “an analysis of the context in which the documents are created”40 and that this orientation is as important as the application of empirical methods or the application of existing methodologies when appraising records including, for example, Schellenberg’s taxonomy that assumes primary and secondary values.

These new contemporary approaches to appraisal have certainly adopted the more enduring aspects of classic organizational theory, such as its emphasis on knowing the formal structures and mandates of organizations, but they have also begun to explore

other, more elusive, characteristics of how an organization works. This includes its internal culture and communication patterns, and its interactions with citizens, clients, community, and society – mirroring (to varying degrees) the ideas of contemporary management theorists – in order to make appraisal decisions that identify the records that may actually best reflect the organization’s actions.

The archival profession has experienced numerous changes since Schellenberg and his contemporaries were dominant up to the 1970s. The appraisal function of archives was first reinterpreted through the concept of documentation strategy. Gerald Ham, Wisconsin State Archivist in the 1980s, and Hans Booms, German professor of contemporary history and one of Europe’s foremost archivists, stressed the need for a more expansive role for archives, including the societal role of the archivist as appraiser and the societal context within which appraisal must be situated. As President of the Society of American Archivists in the 1970s, Ham questioned traditional and modern appraisal theory and practice as well as the archivist’s role in providing “the future with a representative record of human experience in our time.”41 According to Ham, the appraisal function should be consciously carried out within the larger context of society. He suggested that archivists must become more active in this documentation process and he firmly believed that planned and researched documentation strategies will “foster the integration and coordination of collecting programs across individual repositories” so that the records selected accurately reflect a more balanced view of society. 42 Ham was critical of Fishbein and Brichford’s appraisal theories based, in part, upon researcher-

driven archives. He argued that archivists became too closely tied to the research interests of academics and historians and that the “archivist will remain at best nothing more than a weathervane moved by the changing winds of historiography.”

Hans Booms formulated his thoughts concerning the concept of a documentation strategy at the German Archives Conference in 1971. Like Ham, Booms’ documentation strategy situated archives within the broader societal context that supported the creation of records. According to Booms, society should define its own values and these should then be reflected through its archival records. He also mirrored Ham by rejecting Schellenberg’s researcher-driven informational value as an appraisal tool and Jenkinson’s narrow view of appraisal based on legal accountability and the value imposed by the creator, because neither approach would result in an expansive formulation of society’s representative documentary heritage.

Booms argued that the archivist and the archives must reflect public opinion and larger societal values. In the twenty-first century it will no longer be meaningful “to continue to view the individual as detached from his or her social environment...it is essential to view the activity of the archivist in relationship to the societal order, since it seems clear that there exists an indissoluble connection between values held by society and those held by the individual.” Records must reflect societal values at the time the records are created, not the values of the record creator, or historians and academic researchers.

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Booms thought that the role of the archivist is becoming increasingly important because “it is the archivist alone who has the responsibility to create, out of this overabundance of information, a socially relevant documentary record that is, in spatial terms, storable and, in human terms, usable.” Thus, in order for appraisal values to be defendable, especially in contemporary democratic societies, they must be derived from, and reflect, the society within which records originate. An attempt must be made to measure the significance of records in light of their societal context.

Booms originally argued that societal values are determined through public opinion research. However, by 1991, Booms admitted that this was ineffective. They are best identified by studying the functions and activities of records creators within organizations who are responsible for shaping the social order and reflecting the wishes and needs of society. Within Booms’ 1991 revised documentation strategy, “the provenance of the records is expressed through the functionality of society’s record creators.”

The views of Ham and Booms reflect the fact that archivists were familiar with a radically different form of organization and record-keeping context and methodology in the 1980s and 1990s. Ham and Booms adopt Chandler’s notion of the automated office, which demonstrates among other things, a flatter or decentralized hierarchy and a

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46 Cook, “From the Record to its Context,” 39.
blurring of organizational boundaries. This is also reflected in Ham’s and Booms’ discussion of the nature of the contemporary organization, its activities, and its records and record-keeping systems. Unlike Schellenberg, Ham and Booms did not base their appraisal methods on the assumption that every activity within a bureaucratic organization was necessarily worthy of documentation. Nor should archivists necessarily focus only on the creating offices and individuals at the top of the organization’s hierarchy in light of the flatter and more fluid nature of complex, networked organizations. In 1993, Ham noted that contemporary organizations are affected by “technological complexity [and] organizational interrelatedness” and contemporary records are “increasingly created and distributed as part of integrated and often complex electronic information systems with multiple input sources, shared databases, and various output formats.”47

Ham’s and Booms’ writings reflect Henry Mintzberg’s and Edgar Schein’s ideas concerning contemporary management theory. As seen previously, Mintzberg’s approach emphasizes the need for an understanding of the role of managers and their strong preference for informal discourse and work activities as well as the interactions between the organization and its internal and external environment. Schein focuses on the behaviour of individuals as customers, citizens, and clients situated outside of the organization and the ways in which they influence the organization’s overall effectiveness. That is what Booms mirrored when he advised that determining value in

47 Ham, Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts, 97; 101.
building the documentary heritage reveals "the essence and significance of the link between individuals and the values of their society."\textsuperscript{48}

In this way, archivists must include a study of, among other things, the political, social, cultural, environmental, gender, and legal factors, as well as the magnitude of events and market economy contemporary to the records during the process of appraisal. This will situate individual transactions within a larger organizational and societal context and "that is why, in appraising records, archivists need to orient themselves to the values of the records' contemporaries, for whose sake the records were created."\textsuperscript{49} Ham and Booms concluded that archivists need to become more disciplined in their application of appraisal strategies and refine their criteria and techniques in light of the fact that the activities and transactions of government bureaucracy "produce enormous and comprehensive bodies of business and economic data."\textsuperscript{50} Like the theories of contemporary management theorists examined in Chapter 2, their appraisal theories, however implicit, reflect the importance of understanding the interaction between the organization and its external or societal environment. Moreover, their writings intimate a growing understanding that the study of records creators, not only the records themselves, informs archival appraisal work.

A similar documentation strategy theory for appraisal was advocated by American archivist Helen Samuels in 1986; she also advanced a separate methodology, the institutional functional analysis, in 1992. Much more explicitly than Booms or Ham, Samuels very specifically recognized the changing nature of organizations, the increasing

\textsuperscript{48} Booms, "Überlieferungsbildung," 27.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{50} Ham, "Archival Choices," 137.
sophistication of information technologies, and their impact on the creation of record-keeping systems and the records that flow from them. The articulation and then implementation of the documentation concept stemmed from Samuels' work dealing with the identification of records created in large science and technology research projects. For every major project, the records were scattered across various inter-dependent organizations, including governments, universities, and business corporations, as well as families, and individuals – all of which shared in part of the project.

Samuels' strategy was conceived accordingly as a multi-institutional analysis that combined numerous archives' appraisal activities to document the functions of society, for any given sector or theme, in order to identify the best records of government, private institutions, individuals, and families, in any form or media, and ensure that the records are housed in appropriate archival institutions. This form of analysis "promotes the coordination of the activities of many separate archives,"51 and makes concrete many of the parallel ideas of Ham and Booms.

Samuels quickly learned that the adoption of the modern appraisal theory and practice of Schellenberg and his contemporaries would produce an incomplete archive, since the records were scattered across various organizations. She believed that her strategy was inclusive: the appraisal decision integrates government, private, family, and corporate records in any form and media, and also considers possible duplication with published information. It focuses on identifying the best records that fall under specific subjects or themes being documented and placing these records in several archival

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51 Helen Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," *American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986), 123. For a hypothetical case study of documentation strategy for the high technology industry in Massachusetts along Route 128, see Philip N. Alexander and Helen Samuels, "The Roots of 128: A Hypothetical Documentation Strategy," *American Archivist* 50 (Fall 1987), 518-531.
institutions. However, because of overlapping themes and functions, the subject-based appraisal underpinning Samuel's documentation strategy led to the duplication of archival work and the acquisition of copies of records amongst repositories.52

Samuels concluded that her documentation strategy is most appropriate for private records, or for multi-organizational cooperative projects, after each organization's own record has been appraised. In 1992, she set out an appraisal theory and strategy for institutional records in her book *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities*. She advocated "a research-based, functional, contextual approach to institutional appraisal rather than the old search for 'values' in the content of records."53

In short, Samuels argued that the most important functions within each organization need to be understood and appraised, before records are selected based on these functions, and before her earlier inter-institutional documentation strategy approach could work.

This second strategy required a "thorough knowledge of institutions and their documentation, which is best supplied through a series of functional appraisal studies."54 She challenged other archivists to examine the complex functional processes and communication patterns associated with their institutional enterprises:

To appraise effectively, archivists need to understand that the nature of the scientific and technological process and the complex patterns of communication and funding affect the existence and location of records...For archivists this complex environment of internal and external associations requires comprehension of a universe of interconnected documentation.55

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52 For a thorough critique of documentation strategy, see Chapter 1 on selection and appraisal in David Bearman, *Archival Methods* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1989); see also Terry Cook, "Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), 181-191.
53 Cook, "From the Record to its Context," 40.
Samuels succeeded in providing a detailed plan for analyzing the functions and then sorting through the massive amount of records created in complex networked organizations. This ensured that the records identified as having archival value accurately reflect the most important functions within each organization.

Samuels’ writings illustrate how traditional and modern appraisal theories’ reflective of the hierarchical structure of more stable modern organizations have become increasingly difficult to implement in light of new technologies and forms of communication patterns within networked organizations. According to Samuels, the new hierarchy is about conversations or informal discourses in addition to status and authority. Moreover, the organization’s networked and larger societal environments necessitate boundary transactions that sustain the organization and thus, form part of its contextual environment. She asserted that these characteristics, among others, facilitate a blurring of boundaries in networked organizations and change their very nature and structure. Weber’s traditional pyramid of authority no longer exemplifies the structure of these organizations or how they function; rather, authority is relatively flat and spread across these organizations. She noted that complex networked organizations are “more fluid, responding as needed to changing responsibilities and economic conditions. Automated integrated databases reinforce the need to analyse functions, not administrative structures.”

Her writings also reflect an understanding that relationships among organizations have changed. Although traditional and modern appraisal theory supports the

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identification and acquisition of records of distinct organizations, complex relationships exist among networked organizations:

Government, industry and academe – the private and public sectors – are linked through funding and regulations. Records mirror the society that creates them. Integrated functions affect where and how the records of activities are created and where they are retained.57

Understanding organizations and their records and record-keeping systems becomes increasingly complex as multiple individuals, offices, or teams contribute to the creation of a record. As seen previously, complex networked organizations rely on ever-shifting collaborations reflecting impermanent and changing structures. Moreover, Samuels asserted that the structural, managerial, technological, and communication changes in work and culture within the networked multi-functional organization also change the form and substance of the record into an “integrated multi-format body of information.”58

Finally, the appraisal strategies she formulated embrace the rapidly changing nature of these organizations. Focusing on functions rather than structures eliminates the problems associated with the fluidity or changing structure of networked organizations and forms part of the critical context that archivists should consider when appraising the records from the information and record-keeping systems of contemporary organizations.

Greater speed and flexibility in information work, denser connectivity, flatter hierarchies, as well as broader and more inclusive organizational participation, and a blurring of organizational boundaries are the products of the implementation of sophisticated computer technology. The implementation of such technologies has undoubtedly shaped contemporary record-keeping systems, and will continue to influence

57 Ibid., 131.
58 Samuels, “Who Controls the Past,” 112.
the way archivists think about appraisal and acquisition policies in the twenty-first century, as it did in the 1980s and 1990s. As suggested earlier, millions of documents will be stored locally, rather than in the old centralized registries, and made increasingly accessible through organizational networks. The impact of the electronic revolution is reflected in the contemporary appraisal theories of a significant number of North American and Australian archivists.

In Canada, the ideas of Hugh Taylor and Terry Cook have been greatly influenced by the impact of computer technology on record-keeping systems and new concepts about society and its values. Hugh Taylor explores the interconnectedness between society and the documentary record, between the act of creating the document and the document itself. Understanding and identifying records in the networked organization requires archivists to study how and why records are created. He argues that this is essential in the twenty-first century as archivists become increasingly bombarded by vast amounts of information and technological changes that produce new forms of records. Taylor argues that archivists “will remain numbed and paralyzed by our merciless, automated, electronic media... we have to learn what is going on in a totally new environment and emerging culture, which has itself helped us perceive the nature of our old environment and measure the consequences of our continued [environmental] self-destruction.”

Tom Nesmith, Associate Professor of Archival Studies at the University of Manitoba, argues Taylor’s ideas allow archivists in North America, and especially Canada, to “explore provenance information about the creators of documentation, the

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administration of documents, and the forms, functions, and physical characteristics of various archival documents." Like Taylor, Nesmith asserts that understanding the deeper history or richer contexts in which records are created will revitalize the power of provenance in an era where records remain more elusive. This "contextual approach," continues to provide the intellectual foundation for the archival profession in the twenty-first century.

The contextual approach shifts the archivist's focus from the subject or content value of the record to respect for and study of the origins of the records themselves. The contextual approach emphasizes that the integrity of archival records is protected only when they are understood in relation to their provenance. Nesmith and Taylor argue that the context of creation of electronic records, especially, will only be understood if the archivist and other information specialists become more active in the records creation process. This reflects Chandler's view of the dynamic complex record whereby numerous layers of meaning are contextually added to it over its lifetime.

Terry Cook's ideas concerning appraisal stem in part from Booms' and Taylor's work. Cook's new macroappraisal model, developed and implemented at the National Archives of Canada in 1990-91 where he was a senior manager, and in many other jurisdictions since then, does not focus on "research value per se, but rather the

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articulation of the most important societal structures, functions, records creators, and
record-creating processes, and their interaction, which together form a comprehensive
reflection of human experience.62 This approach also shifts the focus of appraisal to the
societal context within which records are created, so that the functions and activities of
records creators that interact with and influence society are documented. Macroappraisal
finds archival value in the location, circumstances, or context of records creation rather
than in the research value of the records themselves. Cook emphasizes that archivists
should concern themselves with the functions that determine the creation of records and
on the structures that affect their creation. This removes the need to appraise individual
documents in an era where this is becoming increasingly impossible.

Cook maintains that several good ideas grew out of earlier twentieth-century
appraisal theory and practice. He suggests that it is useful to blend the ideas of Jenkinson,
Schellenberg, and Booms, among others, when formulating appraisal theory and
methodology. Cook argues that Jenkinson’s emphasis on the contemporary role of
records creators in determining the value of records, Schellenberg’s interest in users and
trends in historiography to determine secondary values, and Booms’ assertion that value
is generated from the society which the record is created should all be considered when
appraising and selecting organizational records in the twenty-first century.

Cook asserts that macroappraisal is “a process for weighing and differentiating
the ‘value’ or ‘significance’ of records creators and thus their related records, and their
impact on society through an analysis of functions, programs, activities, and structures,

Craig, (ed.), The Archival Imagination, 41.
and interactions with citizens, clients, and customers.\textsuperscript{63} Cook argues that archivists must focus upon the context of records creation rather than the individual record and the functions these acts of record-keeping were meant to serve. In this sense, macroappraisal builds upon Norton’s assertion that the creation of records follows functions within organizations.

Cook notes that this approach is very different from those focusing on the appraisal of records based on organizational structure, let alone anticipating secondary research trends and subjects. Like Chandler, he asserts complex networked organizations are fluid and change regularly. He argues that major Canadian federal government structures are reorganized every three to five years, but their major functions and key programs are much more stable. Basing appraisal on functions, programs, and activities not only more closely mirrors society and its need for programs, rather than artificial structures, but appraisal strategy will also not have to be revised every time there is an organizational change. Thus, macroappraisal focuses on appraising government functions, activities, programs, and transactions because they are inextricably linked to records creation and to citizen needs rather than on individual records at different levels within the organizational hierarchy. This is extremely important in an era where the traditional structure of organizations is disappearing at an alarming rate.

The archivist must also be conscious of the way in which citizens interact with government bodies. Cook’s macroappraisal theory involves a top-down functional decomposition, but unlike Schellenberg, Cook does not necessarily find the most

\textsuperscript{63} Appraisal Definitions and Goals for Appraisal and Acquisition Handout, History of Recorded Communication, 11.737, University of Manitoba, Archival Studies Programme, Seminar: The History of Appraisal Ideas and Strategies, (January 16, 2001), 2.
important activities, or records at the “top.” Case files of citizens and groups, at the “bottom,” interacting with the state’s organizations, can be equally important. He argues archivists must deconstruct functions beginning at the top of the organization and examine the manner in which functions operate as they are implemented throughout the organization. Records must be understood in the context of their creation and use within the organization before they are intelligently appraised, and later described and made available to users.

The appraisal focus has shifted from the subject content of billions of individual records to assessing the value of functions, programs, and activities within an organization, and citizen interactions with it, providing together the context of the creation of the records. “Seeing the context whole,” says Cook, “ultimately means that poorer and duplicate records are more easily identified and eliminated, and that the most succinct, precise, primary record is more readily targeted and preserved.”64 Cook’s appraisal strategy directly reflects Schein’s notion that the external environment of organizations is a contextual factor that exerts influence. In light of the unstable nature of the complex networked environment discussed previously, the organizations contemporary to Cook are fluidly designed and rely more on informal discourse to cope with operational problems instead of the structured relationships prevalent in modern organizations.

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The volume of government records in the twenty-first century is so immense that archivists can no longer expect to appraise records only in paper form, nor can they appraise in traditional ways the more elusive electronic records that are created at an increasing rate in networked organizations. The paper records of the federal government of Canada are so voluminous now that it has been recently estimated that each archivist needs to appraise the equivalent of 600,000 books a year. This does not include the government’s electronic records, which have been estimated to be between 100 and 1,000 times more extensive than the paper records. Moreover, Cook presents figures from analysts who assert that more records have been produced in the last 30 years than in the previous 5,000.65

In future, the networked organization will continue to change in ways that will prohibit archivists from applying traditional appraisal techniques when identifying and selecting records. Cook argues archivists must analyze the context in which record-keeping occurs and appraise government functions, programs, activities, and transactions in a top-down fashion rather than searching for “values” in records from the bottom-up. Macroappraisal “provides a strategic direction, a set of tools and methodologies, and a sound theoretical basis, for coping with the appraisal of voluminous and very fragile electronic records of complex networked organizations and societies and for targeting the sites where the most valuable, most succinct, and most precise reflection of society occurs through its institutions.”66 It targets offices or structures where records are located

65 Terry Cook, “Rites of Passage: The Archivist and the Information Age,” Archivaria 31 (Winter 1990-91), 171-176.
66 Cook, “From the Record to its Context,” 47.
by function, and is therefore a “functional-structural” analysis of how functions and structure interact.

Like Cook, Botticelli concludes that archivists must “search for a conceptual view of the organization that reveal[s] the active role records play in shaping the highly complex strategies, structures, and functions underlying work processes in technologically advanced collaborations.” He argues that archivists need to view the organization conceptually and draw their conclusions based upon the application of a functional approach to the appraisal of government records. This approach reveals the active role records play in shaping complex strategies, structures, and functions and in grounding work processes in technologically advanced organizations. In virtual environments, the functional context of records creation becomes extremely important. Information technologies play a more active role in preserving the electronic record and its context because such dynamic links can be expected to change as they transcend time and space.

Within the contemporary framework, Cook’s theory acknowledges a broader contextual environment reflecting cultural, social, political, technological, economic, and demographic factors that shape an organization’s overall functionality, or the milieu in which the organization creates and uses records. Cook’s theory of appraisal also demonstrates a more immediate understanding that managerial theory critically informs appraisal decisions than his traditional and modern predecessors.

Cook’s writings reflect contemporary management theorists’ concern for the ways in which the structure, individual behaviour, and group dynamics within an organization

affect its functionality. Moreover, like systems theorists, Cook’s appraisal theory incorporates their assertion that organizations should be treated as organic, living, interdependent systems. As discussed in Chapter 2, the systems theory rests upon the notion that organizations are established to enable individuals to accomplish more in a group or system than they could as individuals. Organizations are comprised of individuals who belong to groups, within larger offices or agencies that form the overall organization that belongs, in turn, to a specific industry in a wider organizational ecology. This new kind of organization, and the culture and theory surrounding it, plays a key role in the appraisal strategies of Cook and other archival theorists following his example.

Contemporary appraisal theorists have drawn on their varied experiences and the ideas of their management counterparts to develop effective strategies for dealing with the problems of bulk and the changing nature of the record in post-1960s networked organizations. Like Cook, they have a lot to say about the nature of these organizations that more consciously reflects the ideas of contemporary management theorists. American business archivist, Bruce H. Bruemmer discusses the merits of functional analysis in appraising modern business records. In so doing, he provides a thorough view of the networked organization from the inside.

Bruemmer describes it as a complex system where communication strays considerably from formal, organizational lines, where critical decisions are made across the organization at varying levels, and where information at the top is only one piece of a fluid system of coordinated activities. He notes that “the number of formal and informal relationships and of different paths of communication increases with the population of the organization” and that “the recent emphasis on teams and the gutting of middle
management in an attempt to flatten organizational hierarchies” can be found in most complex networked organizations.68

According to Bruemmer, functional analysis is a good alternative to Schellenberg’s appraisal strategy. By focusing on functions rather than the structure of an organization, archivists are no longer required to appraise individual records. Moreover, the functional elements are more stable within an organization than its structure and archivists are better able to “identify who was responsible, what processes were involved, how decisions were made, and consequently, what records to save.”69

Like Bruemmer, Christopher T. Baer argues that an analysis of functions will assist archivists in determining the most valuable records in a business organization. Assistant curator of manuscripts and archives at the Hagley Museum and Library in the United States, Baer developed four indicators that facilitate an understanding of the activities of organizations. They are function, structure, strategy, and detail. In light of the problems associated with the bulk and complexity of records (which are recognized, in part by contemporary management theorists), Baer argues that a study of the business purposes of an organization and the procedural steps required to achieve them are more stable, and is a more efficient means of analyzing functions. He maintains that the identification of the internal and external structure of a complex networked organization is seriously hampered because of its fluid nature, but remains useful (where possible) in understanding organizations and identifying functions. Moreover, archivists must identify

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69 Ibid., 141.
the business strategies of an organization to determine how it chooses to operate and they
should be aware of the level of specificity and completeness of records. He concludes:

Functions constitute the fundamental framework of business activity; how specific records arise naturally from them; how functional linkages are formed; and how functional analysis enables us to choose among record types. We have seen how functions are articulated in the pursuit of strategies and how strategic analysis enables us to assign relative importance among records of a single type or within series. We have seen how certain strategies cause functions to be embodied within certain types of structures and how structural analysis reveals where the records of particular functional clusters will be located. We have seen why and how detail matters.70

The relationships between these four indicators allow archivists to understand the
creation and function of records. This facilitates the identification of the key record-
keeping systems and the best records found within them to be selected for long-term
preservation.

Mark A. Greene, formerly curator of manuscripts acquisition at the Minnesota
Historical Society (MHS), is concerned with the documentation of business by collecting
repositories. The MHS approach to appraisal, that he coined the “Minnesota Method,”
provides structure and consistency in setting priorities for the MHS acquisition of
twentieth-century business records and, in each case, the appropriate level of detail or
documentation to acquire. Greene and Todd J. Daniels-Howell’s warn archivists that a
shift in appraisal strategies must occur in light of the amount of paper and electronic
records produced in networked organizations. He mirrors the ideas of contemporary
management theorists and states that these organizations are characterized by a growing

70 Christopher T. Baer, “Strategy, Structure, Detail, Function: Four Parameters for the Appraisal
(Emphasis added).
number of employees and a complexity of "systems," and, he asserts, an even larger amount of electronic records.

The fear of an overwhelming amount of records to appraise has been replaced in the Information Age "by the consciousness that nothing will be left for appraisal if we don't formulate fundamental principles...that will guide our everyday decisions." 71 Contemporary appraisal theorists' writings are more explicit in their reflection of Chandler's ideas concerning informal structures and the use of electronic communications and information technology. Chandler emphasizes the continual "transformation" of contemporary organizations due to the changing nature of their internal and external environments and the implementation of technology. That is what Cook and other archivists following his example mirror when they advise archivists on the sort of contextual information required to understand these organizations, to document the functions and activities of records creators that interact with and influence society, and to determine the "value" of related records selected for the archive.

Another means through which traditional and modern appraisal theories are rendered ineffective is the increasing reliance on electronic records located in information and record-keeping systems within networked organizations. Richard J. Cox's cautions archivists to change their strategies if they hope to identify, preserve, and make available archival records. A Professor in Library and Information Science in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, Cox notes that archivists "need to understand that the advent of the new and rapidly changing electronic information and

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recordkeeping systems provides the incentive for archivists to return to the appropriate mission...."72

The leading archival theorist on electronic records, David Bearman, puts forward a strong case for re-thinking the appraisal of electronic records, arguing that archival intervention is paramount in developing strategies for managing them. Following his argument that the archivist must manage records in the first stage of the life-cycle, he began studying the functional requirements for electronic recordkeeping in what was known as the “Pittsburgh Project.” Bearman asserts that archivists must make a concerted effort and take on responsibility for determining the long-term value of electronic records.73 In the networked organization, record-keeping systems provide the tools with which archivists can continue to assert an active role in the creation of a documentary heritage. Archivists must fully acquaint themselves with information systems,74 and then educate themselves on how to capture the best archival records within them. He also stresses that if archivists do not know how to do this, they should align themselves with professionals who do. Moreover, in light of the volume of records and the problems associated with traditional and modern appraisal methodologies, Bearman asserts that archivists should focus less on the actual record and more on the activities that the document reflects. In 1989, he stated the following:


73 Formally known as “The University of Pittsburgh Recordkeeping Functional Requirements Project,” the “Pitt” project was done between 1993 and 1996. In addition to Bearman, Richard Cox, Wendy Duff, and David Wallace contributed to the project. See the “Pittsburgh Project” website: http://web.archive.org/web/19991218161107/www.sis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/bibl-do.html (accessed 28 April 2006).

74 Bearman makes a distinction between record-keeping systems and information systems in his article “Record-Keeping Systems,” Archivaria 36 (Autumn 1993), 17.
We will only be able effectively to appraise larger volumes of records if we focus our appraisal methods on selecting what should be documented rather than what documentation should be kept, and develop tactics for requiring offices to keep adequate documentation, rather than trying to review what they have kept to locate an adequate record.\footnote{Bearman, \textit{Archival Methods}, 15.}

With the introduction and pervasiveness of the electronic record, archives are in danger of falling into the hands of information technologists. Bearman’s approach is daring and creative. He emphasizes the need to rethink archival work. Archivists must focus their energies on a record’s function and context of creation, because that information will underpin the archival tools that will facilitate access to, and subsequent use of, the record.\footnote{Ibid., 54.} In the case of electronic records, Bearman argues that archivists should distance themselves from Schellenberg’s traditional custodial role all together. He maintains that records should remain in the custody of their creators because the creation of networks linking all the sections and program areas within an organization will provide the necessary handles to help locate a body of records. Archival institutions can readily link into these networks to access the portion of the electronic record that has been appraised as having long-term value, rather than setting up an expensive and soon obsolete technical unit within the archives.\footnote{Ibid., 54.} In short, Bearman almost comes full circle. He argues that archivists must not only understand in detail how contemporary organizations function, but they must also seek to influence, even change, organizational behaviour and workplace culture. Organizations need to be made more aware of the evidential nature of records, as protected contextualized digital objects, versus information, subject to change and deletion, and leaving the organization legally and

\footnote{Bearman defines these contextual handles as “intelligent artifices.” See \textit{Archival Methods}, 56.}
operationally vulnerable. The archival agenda thus becomes an integral part of the new organizational culture, and archival records become an enduring part of the organization rather than removed from it.

According to Bearman, the contemporary organization exudes a complexity and vastness never previously experienced in society. He also recognizes that electronic technologies exaggerate the number and sophistication of organizational records and record-keeping systems. He notes the following regarding the intricacies of contemporary organizations:

On organization charts this complexity is indicated by dotted lines, influence arrows and circles, two-way authority links, and other shorthands which represent a host of non-hierarchical relationships. Management by consensus, collegial relationships, professional boundaries and rights, job responsibilities limited by union contracts, independent ombudsmen, or central agency arbiters further complicate these relationships.78

Bearman studies organizational charts from three departments in the United States government to demonstrate that authority is flatter at the top of the hierarchy in complex networked organizations. In this case, he asserts that the critical context archivists must understand in terms of records creation has increasingly less to do with the contemporary organization’s hierarchy. He concludes that a new appraisal framework has emerged in the twenty-first century:

It captures traditional hierarchical relationships across time as organizations re-form themselves, and … it captures relationships which are not within the scope of superior/subordinate relationships. Some of the most important relationships are not hierarchical at all. All of these relationships can be encompassed by the concept of networking – capturing significant formal and informal relationships in an organization which together explain its mission, structure, and activities.79

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Bearman’s strategies mirror those of his management contemporaries in consciously reflecting an understanding of the complexities of contemporary organizations — including the culture of organizations and how it contributes to the wider organizational context — and how this undermines just the application of traditional and modern appraisal strategies. He also recognizes that archivists must be active participants in cultural and behavioural change within organizations if they want to identify and select records for long-term preservation.

Australian archivists also acknowledge that several good ideas grew out of twentieth-century appraisal theory and practice, especially as they relate to electronic records and complex networked organizations characteristic of contemporary society. Australian appraisal practice has evolved within the context of European and North American approaches, creating a contemporary appraisal model that combines aspects from these perspectives. Like their counterparts elsewhere, Australian archivists have turned to a functions-based approach to appraisal in the corporate context. In the case of electronic records, archival educator Sue McKemmish argues that archivists need to shift their mindsets in light of the appraisal and management of electronic records. She suggests the following path:

The loss of physicality that occurs when records are captured electronically is forcing archivists to reassess basic understandings about the nature of the records of social and organisational activity, and their qualities as evidence. Even when they are captured in a medium that can be felt and touched, records as conceptual constructs do not coincide with records as physical objects. Physical ordering and placement of such records captures a

79 Ibid., 19.
view of their contextual and documentary relationships, but cannot present multiple views of what is a complex reality.  

The enormity of technological change pushed Australian archivists to base their appraisal model on the Canadian government’s approach with some modifications. Appraisal by function still forms the basis of their appraisal of electronic records. They advocate that archivists need to be more specific about which records need to be captured because the content, context, and structure of records is not self-evident in the electronic organizational environment. This mirrors Chandler’s view of the organization as a fluid entity that nullifies the traditional view of the organizational environment. Moreover, for electronic records to be physically selected, archivists need to specify the data that might be needed to re-create the record and ensure it is attached to descriptions of the functions to which the records relate. In this case, like Bearman, Australian appraisal theorists argue that “the need for archivists to intervene in the records creation process has never been stronger or more imperative than it is with electronic records.” They argue this necessitates an interactive relationship to change organizational behaviour between records creators, records managers, information technology specialists, and archivists in which the latter appraise the record-keeping systems, “looking at information flows, the interrelationships between elements of the recordkeeping system, what (or even if) records are created in the documentation of activities and functions, and crucially what

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information is needed by our schedules to ensure that records are able to be captured by the IT people responsible for their maintenance." 83

Exploring the roles and relationships archivists have with information technologists allows archivists to identify the most important individuals that they should be working with and allows them to understand their unique perspectives. Archivists must also become familiar with the tools and methods of systems analysis and design as well as the functional requirements for record-keeping systems. To this end, archivists and records managers work closely together in cross-organizational teams; their common role focuses on "defining and regulating an organisation's recordkeeping regime, audit and consultancy activities, and maintaining a knowledge-base about the organisation in terms of its functions, structures and recordkeeping systems." 84

By the end of the twentieth century, Australian archivists argued that they can no longer be seen as simply physical guardians of the records selected for long-term preservation, especially if they want to capture electronic records and record-keeping systems. Arising out of consideration for electronic record keeping is the notion of a post-custodial role of the archives, first perceived by David Bearman, and first implemented, as reputed in the literature, by the National Archives of Canada. 85 Post-custodialism

83 Ibid., 77. O'Shea provides a case study of the appraisal of electronic records of the Australian Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to illustrate his argument.
provides for a new way of thinking about archives and records management. It gives archivists an opportunity to consider new ideas and orientations to archival issues and the ability to apply archival skill and knowledge in different ways to these issues. They argue archivists need to focus on records creators and the concepts that support the creation of records rather than on their physical acquisition.

In response to this post-custodial role for archives, Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish, archival educators in Australia, formulated a new record-keeping model commonly known as the records continuum. It comprises four axes of organizational reality: identity (or structure) “representing the actor, the work unit with which the actor is associated (which may be the actor alone), the organisation with which the unit is associated (which may also be the actor or the unit) and the manner in which the identity of these elements are institutionalised by broader social recognition;” evidentiality consisting of “the trac[ing] of actions, the evidence which records can provide, and their role in corporate and collective memory;” transactionality presenting “the act, activities, functions and purposes as coordinates;” and the recordkeeping entity which “deals with the vehicles for the storage of recorded information about human activities.” Each of these axes presents coordinates that can be linked dimensionally. The main premise behind this model is that all of the various elements of an organization merge into one another at some point – fluid and interchangeable across time and space – thus supporting an evidence-based record-keeping approach.


86 For a detailed explanation of the continuum model, see Upward, “Structuring the Records Continuum, Part One,” 268-285; and McKemmish and Upward, (eds.), Archival Documents.
Within the continuum model, as with Bearman and Cook before them (both of whom influenced the Australians), the focus is on understanding functions, records, and the richer context that underpins and animates an organization’s structure. The strategies of these appraisal theorists, like their colleagues in Europe and North America, reflect a heightened consciousness of the complexity and fluidity of current organizations and mirror the views of contemporary management theorists. The very nature of the continuum – the way its elements mix with each other mirror the characteristics of the complex networked organization.

Upward’s formalization of the records continuum model perhaps most directly reflects some contemporary thinking about society in the social sciences, most notably British sociologist Anthony Giddens’ theory of structuration. Giddens’ theory of social structuration through organizations was also cited by Terry Cook and Richard Brown in conceptualizing Macroappraisal, as Upward acknowledges. Giddens asks whether individuals or social forces are responsible for forming societal reality and concludes that although individuals are not fully able to choose their own actions, they are still responsible for producing the social structure which drives social change. Upward argues that Giddens’ structural principles are relevant for archivists as they develop the best possible means of analyzing the organizational context to identify and preserve records that accurately reflect overall organizational action. For Upward, Giddens’ theory becomes relevant to the structuring of the records continuum:

The archives as a functional structure has dominated twentieth century archival discourse and institutional ordering, but we are

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going through a period of transformation. The structuration theory of Anthony Giddens is used to show that there are very different ways of theorising about our professional activities than have so far been attempted within the archival profession. Giddens’ theory, at the very least, provides a useful device for gaining insights into the nature of theory and its relationship with practice. The most effective use of theory is as a way of seeing issues. When seen through the prism of structuration theory, the forming processes of the virtual archives are made apparent.\footnote{For further discussion, see Upward, “Structuring the Records Continuum, Part One,” 268-285; and “Structuring the Records Continuum, Part Two: Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping,” Archives and Manuscripts 25 (May 1997), 10-35.}

**Traditional, Modern, and Contemporary Appraisal Theory: A Critique**

All of the theorists mentioned above have made significant contributions to the development of archival appraisal theory. Yet contemporary ideas, like their more traditional and modern precursors, are not without criticism. Muller, Feith, Fruin defined archives as organic products of administration and formalized two of the most important archival principles that modern appraisal theory rests upon: respecting the original order of records and the provenance of the records. Much of the Dutch manual focuses on the arrangement and description of records. Like the Dutch archivists, Jenkinson believed appraisal decisions rest with the “administrator” or records creator. It is not surprising that both texts centre on the challenges associated with arranging and describing records.

Jenkinson and his successors’ approaches also exclude the majority of records. They focus upon the records of senior administrators and other powerful individuals. The records of the poor and underprivileged, as well as other visible minorities, are for the
most part excluded from archives by this narrow approach to appraisal. Thus, this approach does not accurately reflect the collective memory of a broader society.

Schellenberg and his successors formulated a more inclusive appraisal theory and practice. Their approach focused on a much broader spectrum of society while placing an emphasis on the “record.” However, as seen above, this approach implements a hierarchy of value through the identification of important individuals, positions, and roles within organizations. It does not reflect the means through which records are interrelated and the focus on individual records is negated by the fact that the amount of records created continued to increase as government expanded to meet the demands of its citizenry. Discerning patterns of future or anticipated use for current records as the basis of appraisal is also very problematic and time consuming.

Britchford's neo-Schellenbergian approach is equally problematic when appraising the records of networked organizations. This approach asserts that archivists should concern themselves with records (including those in electronic form) when they are in the final stage of the life cycle, when some historical perspective on their research value will have had time to develop. However, as John McDonald, Terry Cook, and David Bearman clearly demonstrate, the appraisal of electronic records must be carried out at the beginning of the life cycle or before the records are even created. This ensures that information systems supporting important functions actually produce records rather than simply data or information and that contextual metadata is attached to the records before they become archival.

The introduction of Cook’s macroappraisal for organizational records represents a fundamental change in archival discourse. Macroappraisal shifts the focus from the
record to “the creative act or authoring intent or functional context behind the record.”89 Of course, Cook’s work in part was inspired by Booms’ theory of societal-based appraisal values and Samuels’ planned research into and a strategic approach for appraisal. But Booms never provided any workable strategy or methodology for his theory. And Samuels’ underpinning theory of “value” for the documentation strategy was neo-Schellenbergian, whereas her later institutional functional analysis mirrors macroappraisal. Cook’s approach, fully implemented now over fifteen years, combines theory, strategy, and methodology.

There are several advantages and disadvantages associated with the implementation of Cook’s appraisal theory. Macroappraisal is active rather than reactive and focuses on the 2 percent of archival records reflecting citizen-state interactions at their clearest rather than the 98 percent of records that can be discarded. The approach is functional based rather than record or researcher-driven. With the introduction of complex networked organizations, archivists cannot appraise the “record” because of the sheer mass of documents and their transience in the information systems characteristic of the Information Age. Cook’s approach offers a planned and managed means of conducting the business of appraisal that focuses on the context of records creation within the organizational culture instead of on the content of records themselves or their hierarchical positioning. It is also conducive to the establishment of a prioritized order in which appraisal work will be carried out.

Moreover, this strategy is comprehensive in nature. Records in every form are appraised through the identification of functions and the context of creation. Cook’s

89 Cook, “What is Past is Prologue,” 48.
approach also gets the archives out of the business of approving retention schedules for non-archival records. He argues records scheduling timetables should be left in the hands of the records creators because they know their business best, and more importantly are solely accountable for it, and for having the records to support that accountability. The macroappraisal process is highly formalized and ensures policies are adhered to by records creators and archivists.

Critics of Cook’s macroappraisal theory argue it is historically based, because it requires the archivist to research the organizational and functional contexts that generated records over time, and thus is more historical than archival in nature. However, Cook asserts it is imperative that the archivist research organizational structures, functions, and processes to identify the best records within complex institutional cultures reflecting the citizen-state interaction at its clearest. Others have suggested macroappraisal is not objective, because functions are subject to analysis by individual archivists and then appraised, rather than letting the evidence in the record speak for itself.\textsuperscript{90}

Cook openly admits, even celebrates, that appraisal is (and always has been) subjective, whether focused on records, research needs, or organizational functionality. He contends that such subjectivity is unavoidable, and only needs to be made transparent and accountable through good documentation of the appraisal process itself. Booms recognized earlier that neither the record itself, nor any approach ever devised for appraisal, reflects an objective “truth.” Rather, records have always been filtered through various lenses, including those of the creator, subsequent users, and the archivist. Records

are shaped by society and reflect its values. In other words, the subjective nature of records creation and the archival role in the formation of a documentary heritage should be embraced.

Critics have also argued that the implementation of macroappraisal may set an unrealistic goal in light of the budgetary and resource constraints many archives currently face. Many question whether archives can allocate the required resources to successfully implement macroappraisal within their institutions. Cook has also been criticized for not having thought about the transitional period in organizational records management still based on subject classification in many instances, as archives shift their appraisal practices to one based on function, not subject. What happens to the records during this transition period? Cook offers the solution that the archivist must create an implementation guide translating functional results back to subject-based records systems, while encouraging organizations to adopt international standards for describing their records by business process and function.

The Australian’s continuum model formulated in the early 1990s by Frank Upward forms the basis of all recent Australian archival thinking. The focus is on process, not product; on archiving, not archives; and on post-custodial concepts rather than the traditional custodial role of archivists. However, this model remains only a model, and reality in organizations does not exactly fit within the design of the continuum. The continuum, although fluid in nature, is still very structured. This model is an exercise in logic and rationality, yet societal action and an organization’s behavioural culture can be irrational at times, or at least spontaneous and not rule bound. Moreover, the first two chapters of this thesis have demonstrated that organizational culture
constantly shapes or animates the records creation process. It seems that this has not been taken into account within the continuum. Informal discourse and organizational conversations do not fit anywhere in this model. They are products of transactions and are thus records in their own right but the model does not acknowledge it.

Contemporary appraisal theorists have a more nuanced understanding of work culture and its role in shaping the organization, but their strategies do not always provide sufficiently detailed appraisal criteria to support it. Enhanced knowledge of the behavioural aspect of organizations – how they work, patterns of discourse (formal and informal), internal processes, and group dynamics – forms part of the critical context archivists might understand better in order to incorporate a more sophisticated view of total organizational action in their appraisal strategies. To be successful, archivists must consider developing more nuanced appraisal criteria to support this broader understanding of complex networked organizations.

Appraisal theorists mirror their management counterparts by recognizing that a broader contextual environment reflecting cultural, social, political, technological, economic, and demographic factors shape an organization’s overall functionality. This chapter has also explored how archival thinking about organizations, in terms of the appraisal of their records, reflects the qualitative transformation of the classic organization from its origins to new organizations in the twenty-first century. A synthesis of the key areas of contextual knowledge for organizational records that archivists now require ultimately reflects the identities of records creators, the methods and techniques by which records are created, the reasons for their creation and subsequent communication, and the relative importance of the records vis-à-vis organizational
priorities, cultures, and interaction with citizens, and thus their importance for identification and transfer to archives.
CONCLUSION

A NEW SYNTHESIS OF ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL

IN THE INFORMATION AGE

In short, documentation of the three aspects of record creation contexts (activities, organizations and their functions, and information systems), together with representation of their relations, is essential to the concept of archives as evidence and is therefore a fundamental theoretical principle for documenting documentation...The primary source of information is the functions and information systems giving rise to the records.

David Bearman

This thesis analyzes the largely unexplored link between organizational theory and archival appraisal theory in an effort to develop better ways of appraising the record as it emerges within contemporary organizations. A synthesis of the key areas of contextual knowledge archivists should consider exploring further when appraising records from the information systems of complex networked organizations reflects an analysis of who the creators are, the technological ways in which records are created, and the reasons for their creation. It also reflects an analysis of how records are communicated to influence other records, other internal activities and functions, and external society, and the opposite, how societal norms and values influence organizations and their records. The twenty-first century will witness the solidification of an approach

1 David Bearman, “Documenting Documentation,” Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992), 41.
to appraisal that focuses on the context, functionality, accountability, and interrelationships of organizational records. Archivists must continue to ensure that the record is well situated within the context of its creation.

The shift in appraisal thinking from subject content to functional context forces the archivist to become better acquainted with the records' origins and the critical ingredients surrounding their creation. This thesis focuses on the records created in organizational contexts, and argues that the theories and writings about organizations helped to shape a good deal of appraisal thinking sometimes indirectly by osmosis, sometimes directly and implicitly. This study demonstrates that earlier archivists have been, however unconsciously, influenced by Max Weber's theories, which characterize modern organizations as hierarchical, rule-bound institutions, and that this assumption and perception formed the basis (and limitations) of the archivist's understanding of the organizational context of records creation. However, with the emergence of the more recent complex networked organization, Weber's model is no longer a good fit. Contemporary appraisal theorists including Terry Cook, David Bearman, and Helen Samuels have developed strategies that have been influenced (however implicitly) by the ideas of new social and organizational theorists.

Macroappraisal theorists focus on the identification and selection of records for the archive through an evaluation of records creators within organizations, and a nuanced understanding of the interrelationships between organizational functions, structures, and a larger dialogue with society. To varying degrees, these contemporary theories "capture the complexity of organizations in terms of the network of relations between structures,
functions, work processes, records creators, records users, and the records themselves."\(^2\) Victoria Lemieux argues that archivists must use the ideas of a contemporary organizational theorist such as Henry Mintzberg to provide “a more sophisticated theoretical framework” for understanding the context of creation of organizational records. His ideas provide tangible answers to archival questions about “theoretical constructs” concerning the organizational context of records creation.\(^3\) Moreover, Mintzberg’s focus on how an organization functions rather than on the functions organizations perform is an important addition to Samuel’s functional analysis strategy or Cook’s macroappraisal theory.

This thesis is not the definitive work on the relationship between organizational behaviour and archival appraisal theory. Rather, this work suggests one perspective on a topic that requires further consideration. There are, of course, other perspectives that could have been explored, deeper investigations, and additional literature. If space and time had permitted, the research findings could be confirmed, expanded upon, and clarified through the detailed study of a particular contemporary government organization. Assembling reliable qualitative information from such a case study could enhance this thesis’ synthesis of the key areas of contextual knowledge about organizational records that archivists should consider incorporating into appraisal theory and methodology. Part of this information gathering might include conversations with individuals whose job is to understand organizations, such as auditors and human resource consultants. These conversations would give archivists further clues to the

\(^2\) Victoria Lemieux, “Applying Mintzberg’s Theories on Organizational Configuration to Archival Appraisal,” *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998), 35.

\(^3\) Ibid., 36.
informal locus of activity within organizations that is responsible, in part, for the creation of records. Such a case study might shed further light on the cultural context (in its broadest sense) within government bodies and how this ultimately shapes the records-creation process and record-keeping systems.

Another topic for future investigation is the extent to which the writings about organizations shape (if at all) other functions performed by archivists, including arrangement, description, and reference. Given the fact that understanding the nature of organizations has become more nuanced for contemporary appraisal theorists, it would be very interesting to see if this has been the case in other functional areas of the archives. Have arrangement, description, and reference archivists given any specific consideration to the changing contextual information about organizations? This research could also benefit from a comparative study of how the values, strategies, and methodologies for the appraisal of private records and record-keeping systems parallel those for the appraisal of government records, as well as an examination of the similarities and differences between the personal and organizational contexts of records-creation and record-keeping practices.

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4 A richer understanding of organizational culture allows the archivist to better understand the record. This richer context of creation shapes more than just the function of appraisal. Other archival functions such as arrangement, description and reference also benefit from more contextualized information about records creation. For example, this “context” informs the description of records as the archivist creates detailed administrative histories of the agencies responsible for the creation of archival records, the activities that generated them, and the information they contain. For an illustration of the ways in which the context of records creation is applied to the description of archival records, see the Archives of Manitoba’s Keystone Archives Descriptive Database (www.gov.mb.ca/che/archives). “Keystone” is an online relational database that facilitates round-the-clock access to searchable descriptions of records held by the Archives of Manitoba, including records of the Manitoba government, the Hudson’s Bay Company, and individuals, families and private organizations. It allows for a more dynamic and interactive documentation of evolving corporate structures and a more contextually-rich description of the archival records created.
Based on the insights of this thesis, it may be concluded that the function of archival appraisal must incorporate a more sophisticated view of total organizational action, including an analysis of the organization's culture, patterns of discourse, internal processes, and informal record-keeping systems, in addition of course to the continuing value of understanding formal mandates, structures, and official record-keeping activities. This will allow even contemporary appraisal theorists to broaden the concepts of the intricate organizational context through which they analyze records. To understand organizations and how they work, archivists should consider studying in depth the records-creating and record-keeping processes rather than the records themselves, thus situating the records in the dynamic, bureaucratic system of which they form an integral part. Cox argues that archivists must be conscious that

The office creating the records is in a continual state of flux and that the origins of their functions and techniques stem largely from an earlier stage of the office's evolution. Electronic technology has been the crucial factor transforming the office, although other economic, cultural, and political dimensions mediate the ways in which the newer technologies are utilized.\(^5\)

For the most part, the study of organizations has been left to organizational theorists who are only interested at arms length in the records and record-keeping systems of organizations. Archivists such as Helen Samuels, David Bearman, and Terry Cook have begun such study, emphasizing that the examination of organizational processes, dynamics, and culture reveals a lot more about records-creation and record-keeping practices within organizations than the largely structuralist assumptions of Schellenberg. Records created in complex networked organizations increasingly do not

have a causal link to a fixed structure and the activities which generate the record cannot easily be understood from the record itself. Schellenberg’s view of the organization and his evidential value of records do not reflect the richness found within complex networked organizations. Elizabeth Yakel notes that appraisal “requires an understanding of the organizational culture and [the] importance, value, and meaning” of information. She concludes it is time for archivists not only to use such research into organizational culture for appraisal, but also to provide a broader interpretive context for users which “acknowledges the organization dynamics in which the records” are created.6

The widespread use of electronic records, the increasing volume of public records more generally, and the emergence of a new, global way of being and communicating, indicate that archivists need to re-evaluate their role in the twenty-first century. Archivists must consider continuing to find new ways of studying organizations and shift their appraisal strategies for analyzing organizational records and record-keeping systems accordingly. Organizational theorists and archival appraisal theorists agree with Max Weber that “the management of the modern office is based upon written documents (the ‘files’).”7 Perhaps it is time for the archival profession to take responsibility for steering the development of a rich, new, and enlarged interpretation of organizational behaviour based on the unique perspective they can offer on the organization through the filter of its recorded evidence and memory systems. The result almost certainly would be even more effective appraisal strategies.

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