

This glossary has been put together and edited by Cameron Hart, the Archives Advisor of the Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists (SCAA), using terms and definitions from the Archives Association of BC (AABC) Manual for Small Archives; the Glossary of the Rules for Archival Description, the Canadian Council of Archives, resources and frequently asked questions to the advisor.

Access point: A name, term, subject, etc., that can be used to identify and search a **Descriptive Record**.

Accession:

1. The act of transferring legal and physical control of records and papers to the archives or records centre.
2. The materials that have been transferred to the archives.
3. See Acquisition

Accession record: An administrative and descriptive document identifying the contents, **provenance**, and **disposition** of material brought into the archives.

Accompanying material: Material issued with, and intended to be used with, the **Item** being described.

Accrual: An **Acquisition**, which belongs to a unit of archival material already in the custody of the repository. (See also Open fonds, collection or series)

Acquisition: The act of obtaining records for the archives, through **donations**, **transfers**, **loans**, or **purchase**.

Active Records: Continue to be used with sufficient frequency to justify keeping them in the office of creation. *See Semi-active Records and Inactive Records*

Administrative value: The usefulness of the records to the creating office for the conduct of its day-to-day business.

Appraisal:

1. The act of determining the worth of records and papers to either the creator or the archives based on primary values, such as their administrative, legal, or financial usefulness, or secondary values, such as their historical, informational, evidential, and research values.
2. The monetary evaluation of historical materials.

Architectural record/drawing: A plan, drawing, blueprint, or other graphic or visual document used in the design and construction of buildings, grounds, landscapes, or other manmade objects.

Archival value: The permanent and continuing worth of records based on their administrative, legal, financial, or historical usefulness.

Archive/s:

1. The noncurrent records of an individual, organization, or institution kept for their continuing value.
2. The agency or institution responsible for the care of archival materials.
3. The building or other repository housing archival records. Private papers are also referred to as manuscripts.

Archival document: See **Records**

Archival material: See **Records**

Archivist: The person responsible for caring for historical materials in the archives, including acquisition, appraisal, accessioning, arrangement, description, conservation, reference services, and public relations activities.

Area of description: A major section of the description of a **record**, comprising data of a particular category or set of categories. (See also **Element of description.**)

Arrangement: The act and result of physically organizing records in accordance with archival principles such as provenance and original order. The process includes sorting, packing in file folders and boxes, labeling, and shelving.

Artifact: A physical object produced, shaped, or adapted by human workmanship.

Artificial collection: A body of archival material deliberately brought together for some reason other than in the process of daily activities. Some collections are based on subject content, geographical information, or type of record.

Cartographic record: A graphic record depicting a linear surface. Two types are maps and plans.

Catalogue:

1. To organize information about records according to a specific classification system, such as subject, author, date, or place.
2. A group of cards, papers, or other media organized according to a specific classification system.

Conservation: The physical care and maintenance of archival materials, including cleaning, storage, and repair.

Deaccession: To remove material permanently from the physical control and ownership of the archives. (Throw away or transfer ownership)

Deacidification: The process of neutralizing acid in documents or other objects, raising their pH value to a minimum of 7.0 to help preserve them.

Description: The act of establishing intellectual control over records by identifying their contents, important subjects, and historical significance. Records are described in finding aids.

Descriptive record: A representation of a UNIT BEING DESCRIBED (**collection; fonds; series; file; item**)

Digitization: Is the transformation of analog information (from whatever form and from whatever support) to digital code to be manipulated by computer. (CDs, DVDs, Mp3)

Donation: A permanent gift to the archives from an individual or organization.

Encapsulation: The act of enclosing a document in sheets of **mylar (polyester) plastic** to protect it from damage and dirt. The document does not adhere to the plastic and can be removed at any time.

Ephemera: Miscellaneous printed and published materials, such as advertisements, posters, broadsides, cards, and brochures, created for short-term use but historically valuable as illustrations of past events or activities.

Evidential value: The worth of the records in providing adequate and authentic documentation of the agency.

File:

1. To place records in a predetermined location according to a specific classification scheme.
2. A group of **records** organized and kept in a predetermined **physical order** in a folder.

Finding aid: Any descriptive item, created by the archives or the creating agency, which identifies the scope, contents, and significance of records. Basic finding aids include guides, inventories, card catalogues, indexes, and lists.

Fiscal value: The usefulness of records for financial purposes, such as to confirm monies paid, taxes owing, monetary worth, or outstanding debts.

Fonds: A French term for the records or papers of a particular individual, institution, or organization. Also referred to as record groups or manuscript groups.

Form: Any document created to obtain or organize information, containing spaces for inserting information, descriptions, or references.

Fumigation: The process of exposing records to a gas or vapor, which destroys insects, mould, mildew, fungus, or other harmful forms of life.

Graphic Material: Material composed of images rather than words. May include photographs, films, and paintings. (See also Visual records)

Guide: A finding aid that describes the holdings of the repository and their relationship to each other. Guides may describe the entire holdings of the archives or focus on particular subjects, times, or places.

Hygrometer: An instrument, which measures relative humidity.

Inactive Records: Continue to be used with sufficient frequency to justify keeping them in the office of creation. *See Active Records and Semi-active Records*

Index:

1. To list names, subjects, or other information alphabetically.
2. A finding aid in paper, card, or other form, which contains alphabetically organized information about holdings in the archives, based on subject, author, chronological, or geographical categories.

Informational value: The usefulness of records based on the information they contain about the creating agency or other people, subject, places, times, or events and activities.

Inventory: A finding aid that describes the organization and activities of the agency that created the records and the physical extent, chronological scope, and subject content of the records. In addition to this information, an inventory may include lists of boxes or file titles or other descriptive information.

Item: The smallest unit of archival material, such as the individual letter, report, photograph, or reel of film.

Legal value: The worth of records for legal purposes, such as to prove ownership, custody, or legal rights and responsibilities.

List: A finding aid containing information such as file or box titles, names, places, or subject information in alphabetical, chronological or other order and including the physical location of the records enumerated.

Loan: A NON-permanent gift to the archives from an individual or organization. Rarely practiced.

Location file: A finding aid, which identifies the physical location of records in the archives.

Lossless compression = A mechanism for reducing digital files that retains all original data. (TIFF = Tagged Image File Format)

Lossy compression = A mechanism for reducing digital files that typically discards certain data. (JPEG = **J**oint **P**hotographic **E**xperts **G**roup)

Machine- readable record: Records created or stored on media such as magnetic diskettes, tapes, or cards and retrievable by machines such as computers or word processors. (See digitization)

Main entry: A library term referring to the complete catalogue record of an item, presented in the form by which the item is to be identified in any other references. It is the main or central identification.

Manuscripts: Unpublished handwritten or typed documents. In archives, manuscripts are usually defined as the personal papers of individuals or private groups as opposed to the records of a business, government, or other institution.

Map: A representation of all or part of the surface of the earth (or other planet or body) identifying its geographical, political, or physical features. (See Cartographic Material)

Oral history: The aural record or written transcript of a planned and recorded oral interview.

Original order: The order and organization in which records were created and/or stored by the creator or office of origin.

Papers: The personal or private materials, as distinct from records. Also called manuscripts.

PH value: A measure of the level of acid in paper or other materials. The value is measured on a scale from 0 to 14: 7.0 is the neutral point, values above 7.0 are alkaline, and values below 7.0 are acidic.

Plan: A drawing or sketch of any surface showing the relative positions of various objects, parts of a building, landscape, or other physical features.

Processing: The work involved in arranging records to make them available for use, including sorting, packing, labeling, and shelving.

Provenance: The office of origin, or person or agency that created or collected records in the course of their activities. This definition differs from the museum definition of provenance, which refers to the successive ownership or possession of an item, not its creation.

Purchase: Acquisition of archival records by the archives from an individual or organization by exchange of a monetary fee.

Record group: A body of organizationally related records created or collected by the same individual or agency as part of its functions and activities.

Records:

1. Recorded information, regardless of physical format or characteristics.
2. Documents or other material created by business or government agencies in the course of their daily activities.

Records in electronic form: **Records** that are encoded for manipulation by a computer. (See also **digitization**)

Respect des fonds: The principle that the **records** of a person, family or CORPORATE BODY must be kept together in their original order, if it exists or has been maintained, and not be mixed or combined with the records of another individual or corporate body.

Records centre: A facility separated either physically or administratively from the archives, used to store and provide reference service **for semi-active and inactive records** of the creating agency pending the ultimate disposition of the material.

Records management: The act of controlling the creation, use, and disposition of records created by an office or agency. Records management helps to improve economy and efficiency in the office, ensure the regular transfer of valuable records to a records centre, and control the regular disposal of records no longer worth keeping.

Records schedule: A document identifying the types of records created by an office or agency and governing their retention and disposition.

Repository: A place where archival materials are housed.

Respect des fonds: Respect for the creator or office of origin. Referred to in this manual as provenance.

Semi-Active Records: Seldom used in day-to-day operations and appropriate for off site storage. *See Active Records and Inactive Records*

Separation sheet: A form identifying archival material that has been removed from a larger body of records for various reasons, including storage, conservation, or disposition.

Series: Records or groups of records arranged in accordance with a particular filing system or maintained as a unit because of their relationship to one another. A **series** may be organized by original order, a subject, function, or the type of material.

Sound recording: Aural information stored on discs, magnetic tape, cylinders, or other media.

Subgroup: A body of related material within a record group, usually composed of the

records of a subordinate administrative unit.

Subseries: A group of related material within a series, usually identified by subject, type of material, function, or filing arrangement.

Textual record: Written documents, either handwritten or typed, on a paper base.

Transfer: The administrative and physical movement of records from one agency or place to another, usually from the creating body to the archives

Visual record: Material composed of images rather than words. May include photographs, films, and paintings. (See also Graphic Material)