“Capstone officials” and Public Records: Risk, Buy-in, and Archival selection

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS
SESSION 301
AUGUST 6, 2016
#S301; #SAA16
Case Studies on appraisal/selection

- Policy or guideline creation
- Regarding permanent retention of “capstone officials” records
- In public institutional archives
- Subject to public records laws and records schedules
- That bridge records management and archival functions and missions

- Each presenter today will share a real life situation in which records managers and/or archivists and our institutions/agencies...
- Using the recent National Archives and Records Administration Capstone Official e-mail general retention schedule as a spring board concept (defined shortly)
- Again, in public institutional context of selecting permanent records for retention, we work within a context of records management required by law to...

- Records schedules are the main vehicle by which we carry out records management

- Records schedules usually classify and identify the disposition of records either by function (which I also think of as format, such as general correspondence or publications or pro-card statements) or by department, agency, or unit. Some categories of records are identified as being retained for shorter or longer periods of time.

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<th>Records management required by public law:</th>
<th>Records schedules classify and select records for retention and disposition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For evidence of business activities and transactions</td>
<td>Long-term/permanent</td>
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<tr>
<td>To ensure transparency and accountability of governments to the public</td>
<td>Long-term/permanent</td>
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<td>To protect individual privacy and identity</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
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<tr>
<td>To achieve effective and economical business operations using taxpayer $ appropriately</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
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<td>• Ease of locating records</td>
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<td>• Storage costs for voluminous records documenting routine transactions</td>
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<td>• Mitigate risks of retaining some records too long and destroying others too soon</td>
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But,
-Red box = tension line that records schedules must navigate between records creators, the public, records managers, officials and legal counsel, and archivists

-that is, between the operating and legal needs of government/agency and the documentary mission of archives

-For some types of records and units, the distinction between short-term and long-term value is fairly easy to make (i.e. Board of Trustees meeting minutes; agency publications; and staff travel request forms) and the risk of improper retention and disposition is relatively low, because it is relatively easy for staff to be educated about and to implement record schedules for routine record types.

-For other types of records and units, the distinction is difficult, in part because who the creator and user of the records is has an impact on the content, format, organization, and type of record.

-This is because the officials themselves have more relative power within the organization; their records are often complex, voluminous—thus more difficult for
the creator/user and the records manager to appraise using a traditional records schedule—and generally have more historical/permanent value.
“Capstone Officials” (NARA GRS 6.1)

❖ “Senior officials generally responsible for agency and program policy- and mission-related actions.”
❖ Responds to management challenges:
  ❖ Volunious records
  ❖ Risks of keeping temporary records too long and inappropriately discarding permanent records
  ❖ Understanding of, training on, and buy-in to records management

NARA’s Capstone officials approach to managing e-mail as outlined in their new General Records Schedule (Email Managed under a Capstone Approach) appears to be a way to allow public record agencies to use both a traditional records schedule approach combined with a more “personal papers-like” approach based in individual role to navigate the challenge of huge sets of records in analog and electronic format; the risk of keeping temporary records too long and inappropriately discarding permanent records; and the need for ongoing training on, marketing, and support for records management across an institution or agency.
Each case study will

- Define what “capstone official” means for specific situation
- Outline the specific laws, policies, and/or guidelines
- Describe how the capstone officials concept intersects or interacts with existing policies
- Explain the records, resources, and risks involved

So, the presenters on this panel will take the concept of capstone officials and explore it in their own public institutional setting. They will...

In addition to the thread of the capstone official concept, these presentations also share another thread, which is that since the concept is new, we are all exploring it. Thus, we share our experiences and ideas in a spirit of openness, looking for positive discussion and brainstorming.
Presenters

Arian D. Ravanbakhsh, National Archives and Records Administration
  • Capstone officials and public records

Mike Strom, Wyoming State Archives
  • Mitigating records schedules inflexibility with the capstone officials approach

Jim Cundy, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives
  • Capstone officials and Records Management in Kentucky

Ruth Bryan, University of Kentucky Special Collections
  • University faculty as capstone officials

Tamar Chute, The Ohio State University Archives
  • President’s Office artifact appraisal
Discussion

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  - Capstone officials and public records

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  - Mitigating records schedules inflexibility with the capstone officials approach

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  - Capstone Officials and Records Management in Kentucky

Ruth Bryan, UK: ruth.bryan@uky.edu
  - University faculty as capstone officials

Tamar Chute, OSU: chute.6@osu.edu; @tgc chute
  - President’s Office artifacts appraisal