



McGill University Archives - Understanding Archival Appraisal and Arrangement and Description in Two Different Contexts

Winter 2015 Practicum - McGill School of Information Studies

The McGill University Library advances teaching, learning, research and community service by providing outstanding collections, access to the world of knowledge, excellence in service and an appropriate library environment, all of which are client-focused and responsive to the needs of the McGill community.

The McGill University Library comprises eleven branches and some specialist collections located on the downtown Montreal and the Ste Anne-de-Bellevue Macdonald campuses. There are central support services, including financial, facilities, human resource management, library technology and collection management services on the downtown campus. The Library has the largest collection in Quebec and is one of Canada's largest academic libraries. Over 6 million items are held, with a growing collection of e-journals (over 79,000) and e-books (2,000,000+). The Rare Books and Special Collections Division contains significant holdings of heritage manuscript and pictorial materials with specialization in Canadian content. There are considerable holdings of microforms, manuscripts, audio and video media, data and pictorial collections. Databases available cover all disciplinary areas. Traditional services like borrowing, information literacy and information assistance are provided, as well as more innovative services involving digitization, the submission of e-theses, online interlibrary loan and document delivery services and the use of social networks. An online chat service extends the information and inquiry services provided. Specialized software like Endnote enhances services delivery. The Library is committed to innovative client-focused information service delivery.

Practicum Description

In this practicum, the student will gain practical experience in applying archival appraisal methodology and arrangement and description rules to both a private fonds and the administrative records of the McGill University Archives. In particular, the student will have the opportunity to compare and contrast the development of two different types of collections, and learn how each are managed. This project will also introduce the student to the “archives of an Archives.”

The student will participate in the appraisal processes of both collections, and develop a finding aid for the private fonds and update the listings for the administrative records, according to the Canadian standards for archival description (Rules of Archival Description). In the course of this practicum, the student will apply appraisal methodology, retention rules, and arrangement and description techniques based upon archival theory and practice. For the private fonds, the student will create a finding aid that can be uploaded to the Library's online catalogue. For the administrative records, the student will participate in a more in-depth appraisal process and update the current listings of the materials. Through these activities, the student will gain knowledge and experience in appraisal methodology and in arrangement and description – two important functions of an archivist.

Supervisor

Lori Podolsky
University Archivist (acting)