University Archival Repositories in South Africa

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WMA Annual Meeting
Honolulu, HI
September 26, 2011
Apartheid

- Apartheid government in place between 1946–1994
- Strict segregation between four racial groups: Whites, Blacks, Coloureds and Asians
- Race determined where individuals could live, work and study
Apartheid and Archives

- Apartheid system
  - Inequalities in education/literacy
  - Prosecution, censorship, bannings
  - Homelands archives
- States Archives Service
  - Acquisition policies
  - Destruction of record
- Post-apartheid: transformation
Changes in Universities

- Opening admissions/hiring to all races
- Restructuring of higher education system
  - Mergers/name changes
Methodology

• Survey of university archival repositories
• Four parts:
  1. Development of acquisition policies
  2. University records
  3. Non-university records
  4. Archival philosophy and South Africa’s archival system
• 11 responses, 33% response rate
Results

Does your repository acquire:

- University records only
- Non-university records only
- Both
Results

Factors that stimulate changes to acquisition policies

– Space limitations
– Change in focus from historical to contemporary
– Changes in management
– Changes in curriculum/research focus
Results

Challenges in fulfilling acquisition policy

- Lack of space
- Lack of funds
- Competition from other repositories/limited availability of records
How are areas of specialization defined?

- Other
- Media
- Demographics
- Subject
- Geographic location
- Time period
How much influence do the following factors have in determining areas of specialization? (# rating 4 or 5/5)

- Underdocumented groups
- Demographic groups
- Subject
- Geographic location
- Time periods
- Academic strengths
- Existing strengths
Conclusions

• Contribute to documenting society by focusing on areas of specialization, forming “part of the whole”

• Strive to be research centres of excellence, bolstering reputation of repository and university

• However, fulfillment of acquisition policies hampered by lack of resources, cooperation
Challenges

• Unfamiliarity with local academic customs
• Constructing a survey sensitive to legacy of apartheid
• Access to technology
• Literature difficult to obtain
• Response rate!
Potential Future Research

• What is the role of the university archives in documenting society?
• In regards to South African university archives, how is transformation reflected in university archives?
Selected Bibliography


