

THE 80/20 ARCHIVES: A STUDY OF USE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT: A library science graduate school course challenged the author to use an established bibliometric analysis technique to study the use of an information service setting. The author used the technique resulting in Richard Trueswell's "80/20 Rule" to see if 80 percent of the use involves only 20 percent of the collection at the UW-Milwaukee Archives. The author discovered that, indeed, the relevant findings at the repository were almost a perfect 80/20, just as Trueswell had found in library collections. The findings at the UW-Milwaukee Archives hold implications for other institutions about appraisal, reappraisal, deaccessioning, and other areas of archival practice. The author concludes by challenging archivists to define the use of their institution's holdings and to consider adjusting their approach to the collection accordingly.

In 1956, Theodore Schellenberg wrote in his seminal work, "The Appraisal of Modern Public Records," that the archivist who manages modern archives understands that not all records can be preserved. He even went as far as using the phrase "discriminating destruction" as a tool to serve scholarship. The appraisal tool that Schellenberg proposed be the determinant of which records be destroyed was use of the records.¹

Today, an archives student who reads introductory professional literature cannot avoid encountering the assertion that use is the ultimate reason for keeping archives. From the Society of American Archivists' "Archival Fundamentals Series" to its Goals and Planning Task Force report *Planning for the Archival Profession*, those who set the goals and strategic planning for archivists as a profession have agreed that use is a repository's reason to live.²

Perhaps no one shook the archival world on this topic more than Leonard Rapport. In 1981, Rapport, in his seminal work, "No Grandfather Clause," challenged the profession to make the use of records a tool by which plans for appraisal, reappraisal, and what many regard as the "mortal sin" of deaccessioning are accomplished. He called upon an idea which had been expressed as early as 1944 that pragmatic management would not tolerate financial support of an archives which knowingly housed unused records.³ Indeed, this scenario is ringing truer than ever today.

Archives as cultural institutions in the public sector as well as private and corporate archives are having to answer more and more about the use of their resources to justify

their existence. Increasingly, the degree to which a repository's records are used is becoming the ultimate and final indicator of its success.

If this assertion seems brash, ask the Society of American Archivists why archives exist. In the second sentence of *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts*, an SAA Fundamentals Series installment, Mary Jo Pugh writes, "Reference services in archival and manuscript repositories assist users, and potential users, in using archival holdings and locating information they need. Archives are tools; like all tools, they are kept to be used."⁴ This assertion echoes throughout the literature.

But the idea of culling an archives in response to relative use has not been embraced by the profession. Leonard Rapport probably met his strongest written rebuttal from Karen Benedict, who in 1984 published the paper, "Invitation to a Bonfire." What is to date most likely the most eloquent response to Rapport's assertions, Benedict stressed that reappraisal and deaccessioning should be tools used only when there is no other option, what she calls tools of "crisis management."⁵ She went on in the paper to urge archivists to consider microfilming and responsible collecting policies to be the tools of keeping collections trimmed. Above all, deaccessioning as a regular collection management tool for Benedict was not an option.⁶ Nevertheless, few would argue that use studies have no relevance to the archives profession.

If then we are to utilize use statistics in critically analyzing a repository, we must turn to the library profession and its practice of bibliometrics, since the archival profession currently has no similar systematic means of measuring use of holdings.

This paper will look at the results of a study of use in archives. Use, for the purposes of the study, is defined as a transaction in which information is retrieved from archival and manuscript holdings. The study was based on the methods of Richard Trueswell, a bibliometrician who studied how items move (and do not move) in library collections. As in Trueswell's work, the current study measured the number of transactions and compared it to the total holdings of the facility. William Maher provides an appropriate guideline in articulating the elements of use as: 1) *who* uses the material; 2) the *purpose* of the use; 3) *subject* of the research; and 4) *which* records are used. This study is concerned with the fourth element.⁷

The fourth element—which records are being used—is perhaps the most easily quantifiable in nearly any archival setting, though the archives profession has no systematic method of measuring the use of holdings or of using such data. The library profession, however, has focused on use studies for years. That profession's adherence to "bibliometrics" is controversial even among its own. Yet some of their methods may provide archivists with an enlightening means of analyzing the use of their collections for the purpose of collecting, reappraisal, and deaccessioning.

However, if the results of the study are even a partial indication of the use of archival records across all repositories, then their implications to archivists and how they develop and refine their collection are important.

Trueswell's Law and the Case Study

Central to this paper is a case study using bibliometric analysis. Bibliometrics, as it is more broadly defined, is the "application of various statistical analyses to study

patterns of authorship, publication, and literature use..."⁸ Bibliometrics ranges in its efforts from discovering how many times an author of journal articles gets published to the percentage of a library collection which is being used. Various bibliometric studies which span the twentieth century have provided the library profession tools to analyze collections to the level of the individual printed words within works.

In the 1960s, bibliometrician Richard Trueswell took it upon himself to define the proportion of a given collection in a library setting which was being consistently used. His method throughout his studies was wonderfully simple: count the number of transactions in a given period, tally the number of books that are getting used, compare it to the available number of items in the collection, and find out where the crossover, if any, existed. Having used the simple technique of counting the number of recent due dates on the date cards within books, Trueswell discovered a pattern that was interesting, to say the least. Time and again, 80 percent of the transactions were represented by only 20 percent of the collection. The methods and results differed only slightly with each study. Trueswell's Law, otherwise known as the "80/20 Rule," is now cited in library and information science educational literature as a landmark discovery in the practice of bibliometrics. Trueswell held that such techniques could serve as a tool for reevaluating a library's holdings and as a way to predict future needs by identifying patterns of use.⁹

A recent course in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Library Science graduate program challenged each member of the class to select an information service setting and undertake a bibliometric analysis of that setting. The author chose to apply a Trueswellian study to an archives to see how much of a total archival collection experienced the majority of the transactions. The repository, chosen mostly for convenience, was UW-Milwaukee's own University Archives, which houses the Milwaukee Urban Archives.

Transactions at the UW-Milwaukee Archives are recorded on page slips which show how much of the collection is used, the date, and the researcher. As Trueswell used the due date slips from books, the author used the page slips, which primarily are used for requesting archival materials from the closed stacks. The total transactions were counted and then narrowed to those collections seeing the most use; 80 percent of the total, to be exact. From this point, the study relied on the simple matter of finding out what percentage of the total collection was encountering this 80 percent of the use. Unlike Trueswell, the author did not sample the collection, but used all of the transaction data for an entire year. Therefore, the conclusion of 80 and 20 is not an extrapolation, but an actual entire view of the result.

As with any archives, it is fairly common at the repository for a patron to request two or more parts of a single collection in a single visit to the archives at two different times. This means that two or more page slips will sometimes be filled out for the same patron in the same day. Where this was the case, the researcher counted the use of one collection in one day by a single patron as a single transaction, regardless of multiple requests for different boxes, images, or microforms from that collection. If a patron used the same collection twice or more over two or more days, this was counted as two transactions, and so on. This is illustrated by the table 1, which shows a single patron using a single collection.

Table 1: Single Patron Using a Single Collection

Number of Requests	Number of Days	Number of Collections	Total Transactions
1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1
2	2	1	2
3	2	1	2
3	3	1	3

In effect, no use of a single collection by a single patron is counted more than once in a day, regardless of the number of requests. To summarize the conditions of this study:

- 1) Genealogical materials located in an "open stack" environment in the micro-forms department of the Golda Meir Library are not included in the transaction statistics gathered for the study, since their use was not recorded; nor is use of these materials by archives staff for reference purposes. The collections *were*, however, counted as being in the repository's holdings.
- 2) Any recorded multiple use of one collection by one person per day is counted as a single transaction.

The UW-Milwaukee Archives was founded in 1963 and, at that time, held approximately 16,000 cubic feet of archival material. It currently holds about 8,000 cubic feet of records, and at its most recent fiscal year's end, reported 3,361 incidents of use of archival material. At the time of the study, the Archives employed four professional staff and approximately eight students. One mission of the Archives since 1989 has been to document the academic strengths of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. These records make up one set of departmental and administrative collections, cataloged as the Archival Collections. The UWM Archives also maintains a role as an institutional member of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's Area Research Center (ARC) Network. This role is served by collecting the manuscripts and records of a five-county area surrounding Milwaukee. These ARC collections (the second group) can range from the records of local businesses to the personal papers of the region's citizens, and are owned by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The third group found consists of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Manuscript Collections, which are the private papers of people or local organizational archives and are owned by the University.

At the time of the study (done for the 1993-94 fiscal year), the UW-Milwaukee Archives held a total inventory of 591 collections, which included processed collections, unprocessed collections, and record groups; 20 percent of this total (rounded)

equals 118 collections. In the year analyzed by the study, the Archives recorded 467 total transactions. Eighty percent of the total transactions, then, was 374. The author used the exact number of 118 as a guideline (exactly 20 percent of the inventory) and tallied the transactions of the 118 *most used* collections; the result was that the 118 most used collections saw 380 transactions during the year. Had the numbers hit 80 and 20 percents exactly, the 118 most used collections would have seen 374 transactions. The results missed a perfect 80/20 by an astoundingly small 1.3 percent. When the study was conducted on the same collections for a different year, the results were the same.¹⁰

The results of the study in greater detail are in table 2.

Table 2: Recorded Transactions by Collection		
Number of Collections	Number of Recorded Transactions	Total Transactions
1	38	38
1	24	24
1	18	18
2	10	20
1	9 each	9
2	8 each	16
3	7 each	21
5	6 each	30
4	5 each	20
9	4 each	36
12	3 each	36
35	2 each	70
42	1 each	42
118 (20% of the total inventory)		380

An additional 87 collections had one transaction each, totaling 205 total collections with 467 total recorded transactions.

Implications for a Theoretical World: The 80/20 Archives

To be sure, archives are not libraries. Not every technique valuable to the management and analysis of library collections will work in the archives world. In fact, even in the library world, bibliometric techniques abound, some looking at higher percentages of use and reaching different results than did Trueswell. Other bibliometric studies fall by the wayside for various reasons. Nor do considerations of use in an archives end with the raw statistics—there are other valid use factors to consider in a really comprehensive approach (factors like Maher's other three elements: what the materials are about, who's using them, and why). And the limited scope of this case study (one repository only) certainly suggests that more repositories should be similarly surveyed to see if Trueswell's Law (or a variation thereof) really reflects archives reality.

Indeed, some repositories may emerge as 80/20 archives while others do not. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the results of this current case study are remarkably in line with Trueswell. And since tracking use is likely to increase only as a means to justify archival programs and to shape archival holdings, the case study's results should not be dismissed as a mere anomaly.

But what if Trueswell's Law really does apply to archives as it does to libraries? Let us consider a theoretical archival world in which the results of the study at the UW-Milwaukee Archives yields similar results for everyone (keep in mind that Trueswell found these numbers for libraries over and over again with little variation); that is, that all archives contain an overall collection in which only 20 percent of the holdings are seeing nearly all of the use. In such a world, in which the 80/20 archives is a reality, some serious implications come to bear. A few of the major issues follow.

First, for those who manage a public archives, the nation, state, county, or municipality which allocates funds to the repository *may* be intrigued to know that approximately 80 percent of the money spent on accessioning, processing, supplies, and storage has been mostly for records that may never again see daylight. American voters as a collective have always been prone to anxiety, whether slight or severe, over where their tax dollars are going. The nightly news now rarely fails to show some governmental or civilian body decrying the waste of public moneys. This *zeitgeist* is not comforting for a publicly funded 80/20 archives, especially if its use statistics are ever found out.

One cannot help but wonder how much governments and corporations are willing to pay for the purpose of retaining records. Seemingly, the nation is no longer willing to pay for the military, public television, small farm subsidies, welfare, space exploration, education, and congressional junkets to the Bahamas. With high-profile undertakings such as these suffering cutbacks, those who arrange and preserve historical records may be wise to brace themselves. The wondering stops when one sees that our profession and others in the business of cultural conservation are under fire as never before. Pressure from legislators and constituents to slash the budgets of endeavors in the humanities appears to be at a fevered pitch when compared to times past. Inefficiency on the part of the institutions under fire is not helpful to this environment.

For those who manage a corporate or other private repository, the pressure is on to an even worse degree. The American corporation has developed a reputation in recent

years of downsizing to an extreme degree. If a company is willing to eliminate staff that contribute to the generation of profit, what does it think of a department that stores historical records that do not get used, much less generate profits? In David Bearman's technical report on archival methods, he concludes that to resource allocators, funding an archival program supports an "abstract cultural benefit." He goes on to say that the lack of use of archival materials is not surprising, given the disdain that archivists have for use as an appraisal tool.¹¹

Thus, the first implication involves simple management philosophy. How many service-related industries, of which archives is one, could stay in business at the 80/20 rate? If anyone would answer that an archives does not have to answer to the same laws of demand, they had then best be prepared to explain this to the vice presidents or public officials who may know little to nothing about archival practice and, therefore, do not share seemingly lofty intellectual goals.

A second implication, which is extracted from the first, is that in an 80/20 archives, 80 percent of storage space, processing, staff time, and other resources have been for no apparent purpose. Can an archives that is inefficient and ineffective in appraising its historical information be considered well managed? Such an archives runs the risk of being judged ineffective and inefficient, unless it is evaluated only on the basis of its acquisitioning or processing efforts.

A third implication for an 80/20 archives is that 80 percent of what it holds has no current value to patrons. If archival value is based on use, why keep valueless records? Moreover, why acquire collections that share the characteristics of currently dormant ones?

Use has become a major focus in the archival profession's view of appraisal. Certainly, the study of use is not a new appraisal tool. It has been expressed throughout the professional literature going back to the early days of the National Archives. More recently and with much greater complexity, Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young in 1985 saw use as one component of three modules within a small universe of variables by which an archivist appraises records. And even they concluded that while the parameters of appraisal seem clear, the archival profession has yet to develop a single set of criteria which define how archival information is evaluated. Even worse, as they astutely point out, "idiosyncratic personal and institutional practices" result from the fact that specific definitions were never created for commonly agreed upon appraisal elements.¹²

If the 80/20 ratio holds true for all archives over time, this says that previous appraisal decisions either did not anticipate which records were going to be used, or did not concern themselves with which records were going to be used. In either set of circumstances, use was not considered an appraisal tool, and the collection was allowed to become bloated with unused materials. All archival records exist to be used, and 80/20 ratios tell an archivist that previous appraisal was off target.

Of course, this also points out an apparent "catch 22" to the 80/20 rule: if it is based on *current* use, how can *anticipated* use figure into the results? This seems to doom any results of Trueswell's methodology, if used for appraisal, to be off target in some future time when use realities are different. But this is only the case if the Rule is used to single out individual items (or in an archives, individual collections). Trueswell's

technique, in fact, is meant to define patterns of use—patterns that can indeed anticipate use.

A fourth implication is that the 80/20 rule suggests reappraisal and deaccessioning as necessary tools. What archival facility can possibly endure the infinite influx of records without moving materials out the door? Mass microfilming, advocated by one author as an alternative to deaccessioning¹³ will not stop the eventual problem of holdings overload, since virtually no archives can afford to execute it at will.

As for collection size, what the archivist will discover in an 80/20 archives is that there exists a nice, large, but unused collection. By itself, this is not calamitous. Predecessors may have not regarded use as an integral factor, or may not have tracked use to begin with. Maybe the repository's current administration did not consider to ask *what* was getting used. Whatever the case, in an era of shrinking budgets and decreasing support for cultural resources, an archivist had best be prepared to explain how the repository got to be so relatively unnoticed and why collecting practices potentially contribute to the archives' anonymity.

Fifth, finding out that one's repository is an 80/20 archives encourages the archivist to refocus efforts. For those facilities that do not have the time, resources, or permission to enact a deaccessioning policy, efforts must be redirected toward the used 20 percent. This may mean "biting the bullet" and catering to the needs of those that one otherwise may prefer to ignore, but if a clientele exists upon which strong support and publicity can be built, it must be utilized. Resource allocators will then be able to see that the repository *is* being used.

While it is important to know who your users are and even more importantly, their areas of interest, the archivist must pay particular attention to what collections are being used, and flaunt that knowledge to those that matter for the good of the repository. Without references to what is getting used and what is likely to be used, monthly and annual reports citing recent acquisitions and collection size contribute little. Those to whom the archivist answers in the administrative structure will likely be interested in knowing that the holdings are of great research value to certain people, not to mention the resource allocators themselves. Moreover, they are likely to notice this statistic more than collection size, or that certain collections are now processed.

Unlike libraries, in which intellectual access is meted out equally and users are rarely recruited, archives most often provide a spectrum of intellectual controls (depending on the individual collections, anything from no description to an extensive one) and frequently need to tout their program and holdings to potential users. A Trueswell-style study can affect the direction an archivist takes on these issues as well.

Elsie Freeman Finch, for example, addressed the issue of bolstering public and administrative support by way of studying the status of users.¹⁴ But, agonizing over *who* the users are can become a dead end, if left simply to that. As an example, think about the lament of some public archivists: "All we get are genealogists...why can't we get more scholars?" If any segment of the social strata knows of the existence of archival repositories, it is the scholars more than anyone else. Has the patron ever given you pause who wanders in and asks, "So what's in here, anyway? What's an archives? What do you collect?" It never hurts to know *who* the users are, but targeting those

who already know of archives with outreach efforts is akin to an attempt to sell water to fish. More importantly, we must know who the users are *not*, and target *them*.

The temptation may linger to equate the concept of "use" with that of "value." Of course, there will always be valuable collections that are intellectually inaccessible. So the question arises: is the problem a lack of use, or of inadequate intellectual access to records? In the library holdings studied by Trueswell, all items had equal intellectual access. In fact, Trueswell conducted his study in different types of libraries, in different settings and with different types of materials, and the results were always the same. Equal intellectual access is rarely a reality in archives. Therefore, improving intellectual access to adequately-described but lesser-used materials will very likely not affect their level of use. Rather, the archivist should attempt to raise all materials to at least a common level of intellectual control. If the proverbial saying that a rising tide raises all ships has behind it any wisdom, disparities in levels of archival access may not be an issue here.

Reappraisal and Deaccessioning

Although there is no evidence that Trueswell believed he had stumbled upon a valuable tool for weeding library collections, certainly the greatest potential impact an 80/20 study result can have on an archives is in the realm of reappraisal and deaccessioning. Karen Benedict stated in her paper that library solutions (meaning critical collection analysis and reappraisal such as Trueswell's bibliometric technique) to collection management problems do not work when applied to archival materials,¹⁵ the crux of this argument being that when unique archival documents are deaccessioned, they are gone forever—a problem that libraries do not have the misfortune of facing. For this reason alone, Benedict holds that reappraisal and deaccessioning should be used only as a last resort, what she calls "crisis management."¹⁶

Central to her argument is the idea that the numbers gathered on past use are not a legitimate tool to use in predicting future use. To use her words, "It is a-historical and anti-intellectual to determine that, because a group of records has not been used within a limited period of time, those records are valueless and should be disposed of by the institution holding them."¹⁷

No one would deny the claim that a currently dormant collection holds the potential to be a future hit with researchers. Any collection can become highly used at any time for untold reasons. But a response to this hinges on two points.

First, "library solutions" such as Trueswell's bibliometric technique have as their goal not singling out individual collections and items, but searching for the patterns of use. If such patterns emerge, then the archivist has a general guide to what is most likely to see use in the future, not a mandate to sentence individual collections to death on a whim. The same can be said for reappraisal, which likely has never been advocated as a rambunctious and reckless undertaking.

Second, use of such terms as "a-historical" and "anti-intellectual" seem one-sided in view of the realities of the profession. It can just as easily be argued that it is a-historical to support processing backlogs and to use shelf space on some collections when others that may also have potential for high use could be stored there instead. It is also

generally regarded as unethical to allow an archival collection to become bloated and static; this is the very reason professionals advocate a strong, consistent and rational collecting policies and plans. As for being anti-intellectual, it is true that archives is a profession of intellect. It is also a profession of service, and good service demands pragmatism and good management practice. If good management of a collection can ever be based on intellectualism alone then the call for it becomes more relevant. Therefore, it is anti-pragmatic to determine that, to be on the safe side, the profession must treat deaccessioning and reappraisal as a sort of amputation—we do it only because we are left with no other choice. Treating deaccessioning and appraisal as “crisis management” essentially means that the archivist waits until it is too late to deal with the records in a rational and consistent manner.

Some argue that microfilming is a desirable solution. It is no secret that a microfilming effort takes staff time and money. Studies and existing archival and library literature support the idea that long-range saving of space and money can justify the initial expense. Realistically, though, how long can smaller institutions maintain such a practice? To many, it is not a consistent and long-term solution.

However urgently it is argued that reappraisal and deaccessioning should be tools of “crisis management,” the whole goal of the two exercises is to *avoid* a space and expense crisis in the first place. It is a correct assertion that all repositories require a responsible collecting policy, but this should be only the first step. It is important to distinguish between collection management and a physical reshuffling of records *ad infinitum*. A saturation point in storage under this philosophy is imminent, calling out, then, for deaccessioning. So, apparently, reappraisal and deaccessioning are unavoidable. Is it better to prevent a crisis, rationally and consistently over time, or to let it happen and then deal with it? Even mass microfilming, if the archivist is lucky enough to afford it, will only delay the inevitable.

Consider the argument against reappraisal and deaccessioning that past use is not a valid determinant of the archival or research value of records. As the argument goes, any period as a basis for judgment is too brief, and some records will be of value to future users, regardless of how much or little current use they experience.

First, deaccessioning always runs the risk of destroying a future popular collection just as the appraising archivist runs the risk of turning one away. However painful it is, we must ask ourselves: who is our audience, the researchers of today or the researchers of 30 years from today? Here is where the archivist is most tempted to play it safe and save everything. No difficult reappraisal decision is made, and if serious faults are found with the collection in the future, at least the archivist can state that it is not for lack of retention.

Second, by using, say, 20 or 30 years as the parameters in judging a collection's worth, one implies that time will provide validation to a collection's existence. But how long is long enough? One hundred years? One hundred fifty years? Any period assigned is going to seem arbitrary to resource allocators as well as to the archivist who replaces the creators of the policy. Therefore, this argument creates a new question of how long the records must wait in storage before being declared as having no great value.

Also implied in the collective thesis of Leonard Rapport's critics is the idea that records, once placed in an archives, automatically are consecrated as having permanent value. This is neither historically nor intellectually sound, but a blanket judgment. Any archivist who automatically states that the facility's entire holdings are worthy of permanent retention has an attachment to the records that is far too emotional and subjective. Part of being a responsible archivist is the ability to look at the holdings critically and make the hard choices—embraced by librarians and museum professionals. The notion of "permanent value," as it relates to an archival collection, is as evolutionary as the life cycle of the collection itself.

Permanent value, whatever its definition and if it exists at all, must be based on continuing value. In 1989, James O'Toole traced the evolution of the idea of permanence, which started as a mission of physical conservation, but as archivists faced the oncoming fallout of the paperwork explosion, they stopped using the term "permanent value" and instead referred to records of *enduring* value. The idea that an archives could financially tolerate a permanent physical maintenance of its holdings became outdated and unattainable. The preservation of information, *usable* information, then became the target of archival efforts, and usability is best defined by use statistics.¹⁸ David Bearman perhaps articulated the nature of the problem best in the *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report*:

Rather than setting our sights on posterity, we need to replace the concept of permanent retention with the more realistic concept of 'retention for the period of continuing value' and adopt policies based on the premise that no preservation measures should be taken to extend the 'format life' of the materials.¹⁹

Conclusions

All of the implications offered in this study have been expressed and expanded in previous literature.²⁰ This study, then, is no guarantee that Richard Trueswell's 80/20 Rule is a profession-wide archives phenomenon. The testing ground was *one* repository for *one* year's time, with a subsequent study for a different year that corroborates these first results. However, as Trueswell showed that for the library world 80/20 is indeed a profession-wide phenomenon, the results of the author's study suggest at the very least that 80/20 *may* be a reality in the archives world. We hope, then, this study encourages archivists to look at use from a new perspective, and to address the implications seen from that perspective.

It is ironic indeed that while Trueswell's Law is cited as a landmark technique, it has had little effect on how libraries manage their collections. This raises the question, "Since libraries apparently haven't done anything about Trueswell's numbers, does that mean archives shouldn't, if they find the same results?" The answer to this question is a resounding "NO." One notices that libraries are most commonly evaluated on the criteria of collection size or outreach efforts, not on use. This strange element of the library culture is not to be emulated. We, as educated professionals, are to be reprimanded if we fall into the trap of thinking "bigger" means "better."

Archivists may wish to conduct Trueswell-type studies in their repositories to help define patterns of use and to see if one aspect of the collection emerges as being particularly strong. If a repository emerges as an 80/20 archives, its archivist may have some appraisal-related soul-searching to do. Future attempts on the part of this archivist at making the collection simply bigger may mean making it slightly more useless with each acquisition.

If archivists find offensive the idea that their repositories are mostly unused, the challenge lies before them to prove wrong Trueswell's Law in archives. And if they are fortunate enough to say it does not apply to them, then at least they have access to a new appraisal tool.

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NOTES

1. Theodore R. Schellenberg, "The Appraisal of Modern Public Records," *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice*. Edited by Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch. National Archives and Records Administration. United States General Services Administration (Washington, D.C., 1984), 70.
2. See Mary Jo Pugh, *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists and the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities). *Planning for the Archival Profession* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1986).
3. Rapport paraphrased G. Phillip Bauer of the National Archives, who wrote of public records in 1944, "The question of what absolute quantity should be retained depends in the last analysis on how much money the Nation is willing to pay for the purpose." Whether or not Bauer foresaw the management philosophy that was to come is unknown. Whatever the case, his statement was an appropriate warning for a profession that was to face decreasing budgets, shrinking storage space and an age in which a pragmatic call for utility would become more and more a part of institutional policies. Leonard Rapport, "No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records," *The American Archivist* 44 (Spring 1981), 143.
4. Pugh, 3.
5. Karen Benedict, "Invitation to a Bonfire: Reappraisal and Deaccessioning of Records as Collection Management Tools in an Archives—A Reply to Leonard Rapport," *American Archivist* 47 (1984), 44. Some of Benedict's specific complaints will be addressed later in this article.
6. *Ibid.*, 45.
7. William J. Maher, "The Use of User Studies," *The Midwestern Archivist* 11 (1986), 17.
8. F.W. Lancaster, *Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services* (Washington, D.C.: Information Resources, 1977), 353.
9. Richard W. Trueswell, "Two Characteristics of Circulation and Their Effect on the Implementation of Mechanized Circulation Control Systems," *College and Research Libraries* 25 (1964), 291.

10. UW-Milwaukee archives student Leslie B. Heinrichs, in the same SLIS class in the fall semester of 1995 studied the page slips for the 1994–1995 fiscal year.
11. David Bearman, *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report*. (Pittsburgh, Penn., Archives and Museum Informatics, 1989), 47.
12. Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, *Archival Appraisal* (Neal Schumann Publishers, New York, 1991), 50.
13. Benedict, 46.
14. Elsie Freeman, "Buying Quarter Inch Holes: Public Support Through Results," *The Midwestern Archivist* 10 (1985), 90.
15. Benedict, 44.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 46.
18. James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Permanence," *American Archivist* 52 (1989), 21–33.
19. David Bearman, "Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report: Archival Methods" (Spring 1989), Vol. 3, no. 1.
20. Recommended is the article by William J. Maher, "The Use of User Studies," in the vol. 11, no. 1 issue of *The Midwestern Archivist* (pp. 15–25). Maher expressed the ideas of program justification, refocus of appraisal, arrangement and description, space utilization, and support of staff knowledge of holdings as the pragmatic areas which can benefit from use studies (p. 16).

