

A SURVEY OF ARCHIVISTS OF THE U.S. SENATE

BY JAN ZASTROW AND NAN WOOD MOSHER

ABSTRACT: This article investigates the daily practices of Senate archivists and discusses the range of their activities, with particular attention to the similarities and differences among archivists in a senator's office versus those working for a committee. Archivists on Capitol Hill are present during the creation of records and all perform certain primary functions such as records management and inventory maintenance, but the great diversity in the services they provide, depending on the particular needs of their office, renders the creation of a general job description quite difficult. The authors surveyed archivists in the Senate about their job duties, titles, education, and experience. The survey showed broad commonalities among the standard range of professional activities, as well as considerable diversity of responsibilities as a reflection of the individual careers of the lawmakers they serve.

Introduction

What do archivists in the U.S. Senate do? How is the role of a committee archivist different from one in a senator's personal office? And how do they interface with the Senate Historical Office and the Senate archivist? These were key questions encountered by one of the coauthors, a congressional papers archivist from a state university, during her annual visits to Congress. A professional leave and the opportunity to work in Washington as an archivist in the office of the Senate majority leader provided the opportunity to examine these questions in depth. Starting in October 2008, her plan was to serve as a consultant to set up systems, policies, and procedures, and then hire and train a local archivist to run the operation. What was needed was essentially a "menu" of duties to formulate a job description for hiring purposes. Finding out what responsibilities the other Senate archivists handled was a logical starting point and something best achieved through a survey.

With the collaboration of a longtime Senate staffer and now Republican leader archivist, the project queried other archivists in the Senate about their job duties, titles, education, and experience. Eleven responses out of a possible 13 were received: four from committee archivists and eight from archivists in member offices (one had served

in both a personal office and a committee and provided two sets of responses). Five were male, six female. After soliciting their mostly self-created job descriptions, some 35 different duties were parsed out and the results collated (see Appendix 1, “Tasks Organized by Category in Order of Frequency Listed”).

In addition to its intended purpose as an aid in composing a more accurate and explanatory job announcement, this project’s applied research has other potential uses as well: to rework and update current position descriptions on Capitol Hill;¹ as a training tool for new Hill archivists; to identify important but overlooked functions to add to the archival repertoire; to help those archivists who manage congressional papers in repositories throughout the country better understand the workings of the U.S. Senate and the role of the in-house archivist; and to encourage archivists to evolve into new territory, such as electronic records management and E-mail appraisal. Finally, by highlighting the professional nature of the job of archivist in Congress, this research may encourage other offices to realize the benefits of hiring an in-house specialist—or at the very least, of selecting a suitable historical repository in the early years of a member’s tenure in Congress and establish a sound working relationship with archival professionals there.

Literature Review

Certainly this is not the first article written by or about Hill archivists. In the past few decades, archival literature has been awash in congressional topics. In fact, the entire 1992 volume of *Provenance* (Volume X, No. 1 and 2) was given over to “Case Studies in Appraising Congressional Papers.” Notable articles included Susan Goldstein’s “Appraising a Retiring Senator’s Papers: A View from the Staff of Senator Alan Cranston,” “Appraisal of Senator John Williams’s Papers,” by Rebecca Johnson Melvin, and “Processing and Maintaining a Congressional Collection,” by Mary Boccaccio.

Connell Gallagher wrote one of the most pertinent articles on congressional records in the making,² in which he detailed his work for the very different offices of two Vermont senators, Robert Stafford and Patrick Leahy, while on sabbatical from the University of Vermont. The inner workings of those offices and his description of his duties, particularly “spend[ing] time with each record producer . . . to encourage them to list files at the end of each session, box them, and transfer them to storage,”³ still sounds very familiar to Hill archivists. His article gives a great deal of insight to the inner workings of congressional offices and explains much about the creation of historical records in an office; it is a must-read for any repository archivist working with congressional collections.

A landmark article in the literature of congressional papers, that of Patricia Aronson,⁴ describes the functioning of a typical congressional office and its standard records series. Also very informative is Lauren Brown’s account of closing the office of Congresswoman Marjorie Holt.⁵ The first half of Frank Mackaman’s piece⁶ discusses the scope, structure, strengths, and weaknesses of a Congress member’s personal collection. Indeed, all of these and many more related articles recently have been compiled in *An American Political Archives Reader*,⁷ an invaluable resource for archivists and

historians working with congressional papers. Not to be overlooked is Cynthia Pease Miller's volume *Managing Congressional Collections*,⁸ which, although focused on a repository's handling of material after a member's office closes, nevertheless gives insight into the activities of a working office as well.

Survey Methodology

To facilitate the development of a plan of work, a survey was undertaken. The outcomes provide a broad view of records management and archival practices in member offices and committees specifically in 2009.

A brief note on how the research was conducted: initially, a request was sent to Senate archivists via E-mail explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their job descriptions in order to learn about the differences and similarities of what each archivist was doing. Other archivists in the legislative branch were considered for inclusion—those of the House of Representatives, the Architect of the Capitol, and the Library of Congress—but given the specificity of the needs of each body of Congress, the invitation to participate was finally issued only to designated archivists in the U.S. Senate.

It was important to guarantee that no names identifying specific offices or archivists would be used; discretion is a sacred virtue on the Hill. This E-mail query was sent out twice, with a two-month interval in-between. All entries were received by E-mail, and the participants were encouraged to contact the authors if they had questions or other input.

After receiving 11 responses out of a possible 13, the descriptions were analyzed and 35 distinct tasks were identified. A chart was created and an alphabet letter was assigned to each respondent's data (thus providing anonymity for quotes and footnotes); the data then were collated to quantify how many archivists were engaged in similar activities. Once all of the responses were reviewed and enumerated, the authors followed up with phone calls to verify the data—filling in the gaps for tasks not mentioned—and to note particulars of education and experience.

How the Hill Works

The preservation of congressional papers has been much discussed, debated, and deliberated over the last 30 years. While this conversation has been necessary, it has focused on the “why” instead of the “how.” The “how” of congressional action is complex, mysterious, and difficult to explain. This renders the capture and preservation of the legislative process and decision-making—the work of a Senate archivist—all the more challenging and important.

The U.S. Senate

The general atmosphere of the Senate is that of one hundred “class presidents” trying to move their own agendas forward, each working to represent the unique perspectives

and problems of their constituencies. Each senator has staff that supports his or her function of constituent representation. As a senator gains seniority, he or she may chair a committee and hire staff members that work exclusively for that committee. In addition, senators elected to party leadership positions generally have staff devoted to that function, primarily dealing with legislation on the Senate floor. In such cases, they are respectively referred to as “personal,” “committee,” and “leadership” staff.

Traditionally, if a senator hired an archivist it was perceived as a subtle signal that he or she was not planning to run for re-election and was preparing to close the office and transfer papers to a repository. In 2009, of the 40 most senior senators, seven employed full-time in-house archivists—17.5 percent and growing—illustrating a change in the traditional perspective. This trend can be credited in part to Senate Archivist Karen Dawley Paul, a “missionary in the field of congressional papers.”⁹ Through her work, more senators are showing an active interest in the organization and maintenance of their papers and understanding the value of preserving them for posterity.

Karen Paul has worked to build a foundation of trust between her office, senators and their staffs since joining the Senate Historical Office in 1982. She has encouraged the early selection of a repository, advised offices on best practices, and coordinated the accession of committee papers to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Her efforts culminated in the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 307 on June 20, 2008: legislation that finally put Congress on record as endorsing a policy of retention and preservation for members’ congressional papers and their deposit or donation to an appropriate repository.¹⁰

The U.S. House of Representatives

The House Office of the Clerk employs a staff of 15 to handle the history and preservation needs of the House of Representatives and its members. By way of comparison, members of the U.S. House do not usually employ archivists as part of their staffs, but other staffers perform records management duties for the office. As with the Senate archivist, the archivist of the House of Representatives serves as a liaison to its 435 members and 6 delegates, encouraging them to preserve their papers and choose a repository during their tenure, in addition to the responsibility of accessioning the official records of the House. This article focuses only on those archivists serving the Senate.

Rhythm of the Hill

The Senate is generally “in session” each year from January 3—the date mandated for each session to convene¹¹—and throughout the year with designated “recess” periods that fall around holidays. The weeks of Presidents’ Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Columbus Day are usually shorter recess periods; Easter/Passover and Christmas/New Year bring two-week breaks, and the August recess is a month long. Why is this important? These breaks are the most common times for staff to retire their files: Senate archivists commonly report that recesses are their busiest times.

While most members of the archival profession work with historical documents, Hill archivists fall into the European category of archivists, managing both active and inactive records.¹² “In the United States, archivists are typically associated with collections of inactive records. However, the European tradition includes management

of active records as well, which in the United States is often the responsibility of a separate records manager” (Richard Pearce-Moses, *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*). In fact, records management is the primary activity of Hill archivists as versus arrangement and description (“processing”) and working with researchers that archivists in repositories face day to day.

Likewise, there are differences in training. Most professionals earn the title of archivist following graduate education and possibly certification. On the Hill, any staffer who works in archives and records management can, and usually does, use the prestigious designation of “archivist.” Eight of the survey participants carry business cards with archivist as their title, the three deviations being archivist/librarian, archivist/records manager and systems administrator/archivist. Having said that, almost all of the archivists surveyed have at least one related master’s degree (library science or history) or have completed the Modern Archives Institute at NARA. As of 2009, experience ranged from less than one year to 25 years in the profession (see Appendix 2, “Education and Years of Archival Experience”).

Lastly, an interesting word on terminology: contrary to academic convention, a Senate archivist’s day-to-day work is habitually referred to as “archiving.” Although the most familiar usage of this term is to describe the work of IT professionals in backing up computer files, on the Hill “archiving” as a term for standard archival and records management tasks is a colloquialism that has stuck.

Senate Committees

While a senator’s papers are considered personal property, committee papers are the official property of the Senate—not its chairman—and are retained at the National Archives’ Center for Legislative Archives, which houses congressional records from the First Congress to the present.¹³ Both Senate Rules¹⁴ and U.S. Code¹⁵ require each committee to transfer noncurrent records to NARA at the end of each Congress. Defined as both textual and electronic¹⁶ (including E-mail), these materials detail the legislative work of the committee, as well as any oversight or investigative matters, nominations, and treaties.

Not all Senate committees employ an archivist. As of 2009, of the 16 standing committees, only five have staff members solely dedicated to maintaining archives and records management. Those that do hire archivists may differ in their approach: a committee may employ a single archivist to handle the papers of both the majority and minority staffs, or there may be two separate archivists hired by the chairman and ranking member.

For an archivist handling both the Republican and Democratic sides of the committee, great care must be taken to maintain the security and confidentiality of the files. One archivist described the job as such: “Since I am a bipartisan archivist, I must make sure Republican and Democrat records are not mixed together and that access between them is strictly controlled.”¹⁷ For the committees that do not have dedicated archivists, archival work is generally a duty assigned to the clerk or office manager. The same practice applies to personal offices—if there is no archivist on staff those tasks usually fall to the office manager.

Members' Personal Offices

The primary responsibility of a personal office archivist is records management. One archivist writes: "The first step most of us take is determining whether records will need to be consulted in the near future or if they hold permanent historical value. Then a bit of 'pre-processing' occurs before the boxes are transferred to [temporary] storage."¹⁸

Establishing which files to retire poses the next line of inquiry. "Staff tend not to let anything out of their possession in the off-chance that the senator might ask for something,"¹⁹ observes another respondent. This creates a challenge for the archivist and requires ongoing education of the staff as to 1) the eventual disposition of the papers, 2) the customary conditions of a deed of gift for congressional papers, and 3) the probable lengthy closure period. (The maximum restriction recommended by the National Study Commission on Records and Documents²⁰ is 15 years after a member leaves office, although the time frame is determined by each repository and donor.)

Although senators are issued overflow storage space in their office buildings, the limit on space is often the best argument for releasing retired or little used files to the Federal Records Center or a repository. Temporary storage is available through NARA at the Federal Records Center in Suitland, Maryland, and at 15 regional repositories.²¹ When a senator leaves office, his or her papers quickly must be transferred elsewhere, preferably to an academic institution or historical society that eventually will make them available for research.

Gaining trust can be an issue. "The archivist's authority [and influence] on a personal staff draws most of its strength directly from the senator,"²² states another archivist. A senator who has an active interest in a strong records management/archives program, in turn, has a staff who more willingly comply. The battle is only half won though; staffers must be convinced that their files not only will be stored safely and securely but also remain easily retrievable for ready reference if needed.

Primary Duties of Archivists in the Senate

Senate archivists handle a wide range of duties, from the mundane to the unexpected. But whether formally trained and certified, or educated through the Modern Archives Institute, the challenges are the same. Most Senate staff members do not think in terms of historical document creation as they go about their daily work. The hectic pace and "in the moment" mentality have staffers focused on headlines rather than history. One archivist stated bluntly, "Training should not have to be repeated, but staff are generally uninterested in archiving and do not realize or internalize that it is now a part of their job requirement."²³ Needless to say, the archivist's ability to educate staff to realize the importance of their work in the long reach of history is critical to the strength of the senator's papers as a future research collection.

Similarities between Committee and Personal Office Archivists

While staff education is a key component of the job, the first step is the development of policy. All Senate archivists responded that they set archival policy for ownership and records disposition. Next, staff training is conducted either individually or as a group.

Archivists advise staff on both print and electronic records management functions. While these functions were two separate items in the survey, the authors anticipate that in a few years it will not be necessary to make such a distinction.

All Senate archivists perform some preliminary arrangement and description, as well as rudimentary preservation work, if only simply rehousing files into acid-free boxes or relabeling folders prior to transfer. Whether sending records to a member's repository or committee files to NARA, all archivists handle the task of preparing box inventories for these transfers in order to recall files as needed. Additionally, most offices maintain an index or inventory of their collections, including the Washington, D.C. office and Senate storage unit, state offices and their storage units, and records in temporary Federal Records Center storage. This also serves the secondary purpose of assisting repositories in identifying materials when they later acquire these large collections.

Differences between Committee and Personal Office Archivists

There are two key distinctions between committee and personal office archivists: the variety of media they handle and the structure of their offices, which defines the work. A personal office archivist often confers directly with the senator and chief of staff to set and execute policy, while a committee archivist has a dual track of responsibility: he or she is hired by the chairman and often will interact with the committee's staff director or administrative manager on policy and internal issues. Since public law directs the Senate archivist to oversee the records of the Senate, the committee archivist also will work with her to execute transfers to and from NARA. The committee archivist will assemble and arrange the records, prepare box inventories, and then coordinate with the Senate archivist for actual pick-up and delivery to NARA. If a committee does not have an archivist, each subcommittee identifies a staff member to handle records management and to work with the Senate archivist. Because a committee can have as many as 10 to 20 subcommittees, this system enables NARA to have only one Senate contact rather than dozens.

Personal office archivists work with a wide variety of media—photographs, videotape, memorabilia, maps, framed artwork, and, of course, paper documents. Committee archivists traditionally have dealt solely with textual records, although electronic files have been gaining more attention in some committees lately. Committees also maintain video recordings of their hearings, but this technology most often is captured by IT staff and posted to the committee's Web site. In addition, Senate photographers can be requested to photograph hearings. Recently, the Senate Photo Studio has become more proactive, covering high-profile hearings without a prior request from the committee staff.²⁴ These photographs, however, remain posted on an internal Senate browser unless prints or discs are ordered. Personal office archivists sometimes are given responsibility for extensive photograph collections that document their members' careers. The same often is true for videotape collections (in a maddening array of media and formats: Betacam, VHS, .wpl, .wmv, etc.) with the length of a senator's career determining the ratio of tape-to-electronic materials.

Survey Findings

Of the 35 different activities culled from the job descriptions received, most Senate archivists focus on a few that comprise the core of their archival duties. As a whole, Senate archivists are dealing with the same issues, questions, and concerns regardless of their office or political affiliation. And a cohesive set of principles and a ready source of assistance always are available in the Senate Historical Office under the guidance of the Senate archivist. The following 35 distinct activities were parsed out from the survey responses.

Both Personal Office and Committee Archivists:

- **Advise staff on records management functions (print formats)**—Establish processes and best practices for the creation and flow of hard copy records created in an office.
- **Advise staff on records management functions (electronic formats)**—Establish processes and best practices for the creation, naming conventions, and preservation of electronic records created in an office (both E-mail and “born digital” documents).
- **Conduct staff training**—With staff sizes ranging from 20 to 50 people or more, education is critical. Staff training is conducted in groups or on an individual basis. Handouts are a popular aid to help staffers recall key concepts. The Senate archivist has created a set of “Quick Cards,” containing essential information on topics of textual and electronic records that can be disseminated to staff. One archivist has created her own office-specific Quick Cards on the topics of records management and E-mail archiving.²⁵
- **Set archival policy for records disposition**—The Senate archivist’s handbook offers a suggested disposition schedule for an array of records.²⁶ An archivist tailors this list to fit the work habits of his or her particular office.
- **Work with IT to retain, migrate electronic files**—Most Senate offices and committees employ a systems administrator (“SA”) to handle the office’s technology issues. Almost all Senate archivists work closely with this staff member for assistance with electronic records (except the one respondent who is both SA and archivist).
- **Maintain index/inventory of collection**—Most offices will have multiple storage locations, both in-house and at temporary federal storage facilities hosted by NARA. An easy to use, up-to-date inventory is critical to maintain control of the collection.
- **Prepare inventories of archival transfers**—Whether sending records to a member’s repository or committee files to NARA, all archivists handle the task of preparing box inventories for these transfers.
- **Recall boxes from NARA storage**—Personal office archivists can retrieve boxes from the NARA Federal Records Centers with a few days’ notice. Committees can recall materials from the Center for Legislative Archives with only a few hours’ notice.

- **Arrangement and description (pre-processing)**—One archivist describes this aspect of the job as crucial in case records need to be recalled for office use, as well as for the future benefit of the repository. However, the “fine work of processing that is normally done to prepare records for researchers” is not necessary at this stage.²⁷
- **Basic preservation, rehousing, relabeling**—Archivists often transfer the records from standard office files to acid-free folders and boxes before storing or shipping to the repository.
- **Set records ownership policy**—A clearly defined records ownership policy stating that materials produced in the office are the sole property of the member should be enacted during the initial set-up after the senator is sworn into office. If not, a personal office archivist would make this the first order of business. As stated previously, committee records are the official property of the federal government and as such are transferred to NARA on a scheduled basis.
- **Conduct staff exit interviews**—Staffers can come and go at a dizzying rate on Capitol Hill. Job turnover is high, with many staffers leaving to work on campaigns, attend graduate school, or move to a job in the executive branch or private sector. Most Senate archivists conduct exit interviews with departing staff to determine what records have been created and maintained and which to pass on to successors to use and “archive” in the future.
- **Supervise the work of interns**—Interns are the equivalent of student assistants in an academic setting. They are available for a wide variety of tasks and can be trained to assist with special archival projects, although usually used for more mundane activities such as creating box contents lists, updating staff lists, etc. Because interns usually only stay in an office for a few months at most, the use of interns requires constant training and supervision.
- **Conduct internal reference and research**—Since an archivist has access to an office/committee’s historical documents, they are the logical resource to consult when a question arises. Many archivists spend a considerable amount of their time tracking down information for staff.
- **Work with vendors**—Several archivists work with both internal and outside vendors to purvey services such as printing and graphics, framing, digital conversion, archival supplies, photo studio services, etc. Some archivists choose to create their own forms and databases to track office records and memorabilia while others work with outside vendors to purchase specially designed inventory software. As well, existing office systems used for scheduling and correspondence can be mined for data, but this work requires the assistance of IT staff and the vendor’s on-site representative (see outlier item “Extract reports from correspondence management system” below for additional information).
- **Liaise with Senate archivist**—Committee and personal office archivists serve as the liaison between their chairman/senator and the Senate archivist. All archivists working in the Senate tap her expertise and experience.

Personal Office Archivists:

- **Help identify a suitable repository; liaise with repository staff**—In-house archivists who are hired before a senator chooses a repository can offer valuable input during the selection process, in addition to working as a liaison between the prospective repository and the office counsel, chief of staff and senator.
- **Advise member's state offices on records management, preservation, and archival issues**—A senator's constituency is well-served by the field office staff, and many archivists work to capture documentation of events outside Washington by identifying the records held in the state offices and incorporating them into the records inventory or maintaining separate inventories.
- **Maintain staff list, senator's committees, biographical information**—A logical extension of the archivist's responsibilities, most archivists maintain a file of biographical information about their member, with committee assignments, personal information, and often a complete database of former employees (a very useful reference tool for the repository when processing the collection).
- **Track memorabilia**—Senators accumulate memorabilia from a number of sources: souvenirs from foreign travel, mementos from constituents, awards from interest groups, and more. These plaques, trophies, hats, pens, rugs, pottery, artwork, etc., require specialized cataloging and storage methods. Some offices choose to create their own systems—spreadsheets or office-generated tracking forms stored in binders are common. Other offices purchase database software from History Associates Inc.²⁸
- **Manage photo collection**—This issue divided our archivists. Some offices entrust the archivist with the organization, identification, preservation, and retrieval of most or all of the senator's photo collection. In others, the Press Office takes responsibility for it. For digital images, archivists also are challenged to capture and record metadata in a manner that will follow the images through inevitable future migrations.
- **Archive video**—A senator elected before the turn of the millennium most likely has a collection of VHS tapes slowly demagnetizing; and for a senator taking office decades earlier, the problem compounds exponentially. Many offices are undertaking the conversion of these tapes to digital files. The archivist's work also may include responsibility for new additions of video, most likely "born digital."

Committee Archivists:

- **Capture documentation of legislative, oversight, investigations, nominations, treaties**—This responsibility summarizes the powers given to Senate committees under federal law and provides a guideline to committee archivists when creating a records management policy.
- **Appraise and organize departed staff's E-mail**—Federal law mandates that committees retain electronic files, including E-mail, so a range of practices exists. One archivist developed a system of appraising a former staffer's E-mail for relevancy, segregating it to a file folder, converting the material to PDF for ease of use, and retaining it on the server for reference. A copy of this file also

is transferred to NARA. In personal offices, how electronic records are handled is the member's choice and may or may not be appraised until final disposition.

“Outlier” Responsibilities:

Only one or two archivists listed the following responsibilities in their job descriptions, but they illustrate the variety and range of activities among Senate archivists, and perhaps point to future trends.

- **Extract reports from correspondence management system**—Capitol Hill offices use Intranet-based correspondence management systems to compose and track responses to constituent mail. These systems contain myriad reports detailing such topics as mail volume, mail backlogs, staff productivity, and constituent contacts. Unfortunately, this information is not easily transferable to the repository when a senator leaves office. The ability to extract specific reports from the system on a periodic basis provides a historical snapshot and statistical data for future researchers. One archivist mines this system for data on a monthly, yearly, and per Congress basis.²⁹
- **Hands-on data management (backup, preservation, retrieval)**—Instead of working with the office SA, at least one archivist has the technical skills to handle electronic records himself.
- **Prep to reformat for microfilming or scanning**—The Senate Sergeant at Arms offers convenient microfilm reformatting services, but staff must prepare the documents first, eliminating paper clips and staples, as well as organizing the materials with a bar-coded cover sheet.
- **Artwork registrar/curator**—One archivist reports being the “liaison with artists who sometimes send work to the office” for display, as well as working with shipping companies, frame shops, and insurers.³⁰
- **Attic storage supervisor**—Each Senate office is allocated a storage locker in one of the Senate office buildings. With space at a premium in the office suite, infrequently used materials, as well as records awaiting transfer to the repository, often are stored in these attic/basement spaces. The Senate archivist strongly discourages the storage of special media in these lockers³¹ and would prefer they not be used for archival storage at all.
- **Track supplies**—One of the primary uses of the attic/basement lockers is storage of surplus office supplies, so at least one respondent has become the primary contact for keeping track of that inventory.
- **Respond to queries by the general public**—One archivist provides information to the general public about committee records, usually in response to phone inquiries regarding the availability and types of materials contained in those records.³²
- **Maintain reference resources in office**—Many offices maintain print copies of published references (e.g., *Congressional Record*, *Executive Calendar*, and *Congressional Quarterly*) and a few archivists have taken on the role of “librarian,” keeping these materials current for their office.
- **Identify sensitive records; recommend access restrictions**—Staff archivists can assist a repository by preemptively identifying classified or sensitive materials from the Department of Defense, the State Department and other agencies.

Likewise, committee archivists that appraise E-mail can identify and segregate sensitive messages.

- **Maintain Web site**—Only one archivist, the most technically savvy in the survey, reports being Web master for his senator’s Web site. Regarding long-term preservation of senatorial Web sites, congressional “crawls” have been conducted by the Library of Congress and the National Archives as recently as 2008. However, these preservation initiatives may not persist in the future so each office will need to address this issue before long.
- **Maintain bibliography of senator’s published works**—Some archivists retain a listing of the commercially published works of their member for internal reference use.

Conclusion

Although this research came about for the very practical purposes of preparing a plan of work and composing a precise and explanatory job description for a specific position in the U.S. Senate, there are several broader implications for archivists in many other settings.

First, the survey speaks to our changing role as archivists/records managers—and more specifically as electronic records managers. Although this is especially true when an archivist works side-by-side with staff in an office setting, the prevalence of digital files has made all archivists cognizant of their role in managing, migrating, and preserving this fragile format for future use.

Another awareness is the trend toward a less formal, more fluid definition of what an archivist is, how one enters the field, and what the job entails. The phrase “citizen archivist” may make some cringe, but more involvement by non-professionals in “our” field is a reality of the twenty-first century. This may be an especially meaningful realization for academic archivists who come to the profession almost exclusively through acquisition of a master’s degree and professional credential.

Of note, too, is the value in writing, reviewing, and updating one’s position description on a regular basis—not an extraordinary suggestion—but to take the further step of comparing it with those of other colleagues in similar positions. When following up with the participants after the survey, all were extremely interested to learn of the breadth of duties being undertaken by archivists in other Senate offices and committees, and were anxious to fulfill their position’s potential by adding these newly realized responsibilities to their archival repertoire. Future surveys also may document the activities of other legislative archivists—those of the House of Representatives, the Architect of the Capitol, and the Library of Congress—as a comparative analysis likely would provide useful insights, points of comparison, and possible collaboration.

Learning what others are doing in the field also might help archivists, particularly “lone arrangers,” make a case for their moving into new territory—such as electronic records management, Web content/context management or indexing of E-mail records—not only for professional growth and development but to increase job security as budgets shrink and institutional belt-tightening occurs.

It is only through recognizing and pursuing such opportunities inherent in today's information landscape that archivists can remain relevant in this digital era. If, in fact, the making of legislation is akin to making sausages, the archivists of the U.S. Senate have found a niche in shaping, preserving, and rendering palatable the documentation of the workings of Congress for future generations.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Jan Zastrow, C.A., is archivist for Senator Harry Reid, on professional leave of absence from the University of Hawaii Library where she serves as Congressional Papers archivist and chairs the Archives & Manuscripts Department. She graduated with her M.L.I.S. in 1995 from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and obtained a second master's degree in political science in 2005.

Nan Wood Mosher has worked for Senator Mitch McConnell since 1987. Starting as an intern, she held a number of administrative positions on his personal office staff and moved up to office manager in 1998. While in that post, archival duties were her responsibility until the position of archivist was created in 2007. Mosher also served as administrative director in the offices of the Majority Whip and Republican Leader. A graduate of Western Kentucky University with a B.A. degree in public relations and a minor in government, she attended the Modern Archives Institute in 2007.

Appendix 1—Tasks Organized by Category in Order of Frequency Listed

Records Management	Administrative Services	Archival Activities	IT/Digital/Media
Advise staff on records management functions—print formats	Prepare inventories of archival transfers	Maintain index/inventory of collection	Work w/ IT to retain, migrate electronic files
Liaise with Senate archivist	Recall boxes from NARA storage	Basic preservation, rehousing, relabeling	Manage photo collection <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>
Set records ownership policy	Supervise the work of interns	Arrangement & description (pre-processing)	Archive video <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>
Advise staff on records management functions—electronic formats	Maintain staff list, senator's committees, biographical info <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>	Help identify suitable repository; liaise with repository staff <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>	Prep to reformat for microfilm or scanning
Set archival policy for records disposition	Attic storage supervisor	Conduct staff exit interviews	Hands-on data management (backup, preservation, retrieval)
Conduct staff training on what/how to archive (what is a record, how to set up files, etc.)	Conduct internal reference and research	Track memorabilia <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>	Appraise and organize departed staff's email <i>(committee archivists only)</i>
Advise member's state offices on records management, preservation, and archival issues <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>	Work with vendors	Capture documentation of legislative, oversight, investigations, nominations, treaties <i>(committee archivists only)</i>	Extract reports from correspondence management system <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>
	Track supplies	Artwork registrar/curator <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>	Maintain Web site
	Maintain reference resources in office	Identify sensitive records; recommend access restrictions	
	Maintain bibliography of senator's published works <i>(personal office archivists only)</i>	Respond to queries by the general public	

Appendix 2—Education and Years of Archival Experience (2009)

Years Of Archival Experience				
0-2 Yrs	3-5 yrs	6-9 yrs	10-15 yrs	16+ yrs
2 archivists	6 archivists	1 archivist	1 archivist	1 archivist

Highest Educational Level Achieved				
Bachelor's	Master's (M.L.S.)	Master's (History)	Master's (Other)	M.L.S. + 2nd Master's
4 archivists	2 archivists	2 archivists	1 archivist	2 archivists

NOTES

1. "Capitol Hill" is a shorthand reference for the United States Congress. "Capitol Hill" and "the Hill" are used interchangeably.
2. Connell B. Gallagher, "A Repository Archivist on Capitol Hill," *Midwestern Archivist* XIV:1 (1991): 49–58.
3. *Ibid.*, 56.
4. Patricia Aronsson, "Appraisal of Twentieth-Century Congressional Collections," *Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance*, ed. Nancy E. Peace (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1984): 81–104.
5. Lauren R. Brown, "Present at the Tenth Hour: Appraising and Accessioning the Papers of Congresswoman Marjorie S. Holt," *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship* 2: 2 (1987): 95–102.
6. Frank Mackaman, "Congressional Collections: Where the Mundane Becomes Compelling" (paper presented in *Extension of Remarks, Legislative Studies Section Newsletter*, American Political Science Association meeting, July 2005).
7. *An American Political Archives Reader*, ed. Karen Dawley Paul, Glenn R. Gray, and L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow, 2009).
8. Cynthia Pease Miller, *Managing Congressional Collections* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008).
9. Richard Baker, Senate Historian Emeritus. Interview by Brian Lamb. Q&A. C-SPAN. September 27, 2009.
10. Karen Dawley Paul, "H.Con.Res 307, 110th Congress, Passes," *Congressional Papers Roundtable Newsletter*, Society of American Archivists, July 2008: 1–6.
11. U.S. Constitution, amend. 20, sec. 1.
12. Richard Pearce-Moses, *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005): 33.
13. Richard Hunt, "Annual Report of the Center for Legislative Archives to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress" (presented at the meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress, Washington, D.C., September 8, 2008): 1.
14. Senate Rule XI, *Standing Rules of the Senate*, 2.
15. H.R. 18612 To enact title 44, United States Code, Public Law 620, 90th Cong., 2d sess. (October 22, 1968): 2118.
16. H.R. 13828 An act to amend title 44, United States Code, Public Law 575, 94th Cong., 2d sess. (October 21, 1976): 3301.
17. Committee Archivist "J," 2 February 2009, personal E-mail.
18. Personal Office Archivist "B," interview with author, 23 March 2009.
19. Personal Office Archivist "G," interview with author, 14 July 2009.
20. "National Study Commission on Records and Documents of Federal Officials, Final Report" (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977).
21. There are 17 total Federal Records Centers across the country, 15 regionals and Suitland, plus one devoted to military records in St. Louis not included in this figure.
22. Personal Office Archivist "A," interview with author, 13 July 2009.
23. Personal Office Archivist "G," 14 July 2009, personal E-mail.
24. Capitol Hill Archivists & Records Managers (CHARM) meeting with Senate Photography Studio director, 21 November 2008.
25. Personal Office Archivist "H," meeting with author, 28 September 2009.
26. Karen Dawley Paul, *Records Management Handbook for United States Senators* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Senate, 2006): 25–49.
27. Personal Office Archivist "B," 23 March 2009, personal E-mail.
28. History Associates Incorporated is a Rockville, Maryland-based archival/records management firm "devoted to preserving, protecting, and promoting access to an organization's documentary history." *The Best Company in History*TM, corporate publication, 1981–2001, 17.
29. Personal Office Archivist "H," 10 July 2009, personal E-mail.
30. Personal Office Archivist "B," 23 March 2009, personal E-mail.
31. Paul, *Records Management Handbook*, 77.
32. Committee Archivist "J," 2 February 2009, personal E-mail.