is reportedly typical for a Stones concert. Fifty years from now, as a result, *Shine a Light* may offer a reliable visual record of the Stones performing, but a flawed record of the group's following" (p. 7).

Bernard and Rabin clearly hope to discourage this type of practice. Archivists should be heartened by their insistence on critical and nuanced thinking, on holding audiovisual records to the same evidentiary standards as other types of information, and they should heed the implicit call to promote greater media literacy among their users. As media production tools extend to ever-broader segments of the nonprofessional population, and access to content increases through online dissemination, this becomes even more important.

Archival Storytelling provides archivists with valuable insights into user needs and challenges us to think more deeply about their broader implications: how do we provide access in ways that better allow these stories to be told, and told well and truthfully? Too often the gate-keeping driven by rights, costs, or other access barriers results in a limited or reduced choice of images and an overfrequent use of certain public domain materials, when a far more diverse range remains locked away, whether literally or figuratively. By broadening access to archival footage, music, and other media, archivists can ensure their richer, more historically accurate, and creative use in works of documentation, art, entertainment, and reportage. Easier said than done, of course; the continuing economic and funding constraints faced by both independent filmmakers and archives make this a challenge. But *Archival Storytelling* is a big step in the right direction.

© Grace Lile.
WITNESS Media Archive

Records Management: Making the Transition from Paper to Electronic

By David O. Stephens, CRM. Lexena, Kans.: ARMA International, 2007. 292 pp. $55.00. ISBN 1-931786-29-1.

As electronic records proliferate, many organizations are turning their attention toward effective management of their digital assets. Best practices like those published by NARA[1] and the InterPARES[2] recommend that archivists take an active role early on in the life cycle of digital information, drafting and executing policies that effectively shepherd an organization's assets from electronic object to electronic record and beyond. Successful electronic records management

---

[1] "NARA Electronic Records Management (ERM) Guidance on the Web," available at http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/erm-guidance.html, accessed 26 June 2009.

[2] The InterPARES website (http://www.interpares.org, accessed 26 June 2009) provides a number of documents that consider a range of electronic records management issues.

programs require archivists to provide ongoing consultation and assistance with IT professionals, department heads, and administrators to make sure that organizations strive to, as one recent SAA session put it, "tame the e-tiger."

In this regard, we have much to learn from our colleagues in the records management profession. While the fields of archives and records management have always overlapped (in some organizations to the point of full integration), as archivists become more involved in the early stages of electronic records retention, we begin to resemble records managers.

David O. Stephens' *Records Management: Making the Transition from Paper to Electronic* provides a well-researched, comprehensive treatment of the major issues facing organizations tasked with balancing analog and electronic records management. While Stephens' book was primarily written with the records manager in mind, it has much to offer the archivist asked to develop a plan for organizing, maintaining, and preserving the records of organizations that are increasingly digital.

As vice president of records management consulting at Zasio Enterprises, Stephens is a celebrated figure in the records management field and a known authority on electronic records management. In addition to numerous speaking engagements, Stephens wrote other records management texts prior to his most recent book, including *Advanced Records Management: Towards Best Professional Practices* (2005) and *Electronic Records Retention: New Strategies for Data Life Cycle Management* (2003). Stephens' experience writing seminal works on records management is evident in his clear, textbooklike articulation of often complicated concepts.

Stephens divides *Records Management* into seven chapters. Following a definition and a review of the state of a field he continually refers to as "RIM" ("Records and Information Management"), Stephens deals in detail with a range of areas, generally moving from policy to implementation. The first half of the book explains the core concepts of records management without focusing on analog or electronic formats too deeply. Stephens provides concrete suggestions for establishing a records management program—and, crucially, for winning upper-level administrative support for such a program's creation. His discussion of the records management life cycle is lucid and holds its own with (and was likely influenced by) any similar treatment by Theodore Schellenberg. In his chapters on records management's relation to the law, Stephens ably demonstrates his understanding of the legal requirements of records retention and even dispels some myths concerning lawful retention (for example, the "seven year myth," which is the misconception that all records need to be kept for seven years to satisfy legal and financial requirements.) Along the way, Stephens peppers his format-agnostic analysis of records management with examples germane to the electronic records environment, as if to remind the reader of the discussion's relationship to the pressing issue.

Once Stephens has provided a thorough and articulate explanation of the major issues surrounding records management, he turns his attention to the electronic environment. This is where the book becomes particularly relevant for archivists eager for any suggestions on how best to manage electronic records. In a chapter entitled Managing the Message, Stephens identifies three main methods of electronic communication: email, instant messaging, and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) messaging. He more than justifies his discussion of email by ticking off some eye-popping statistics: "90 percent of all business documents are created electronically, and 60 percent of those are transmitted as e-mail attachments" "spam . . . can be as high as 90 percent [of all email traffic]," and so forth. Stephens proposes an email retention policy in which employees play an active role in weeding their accounts. Faced with the abundance of email correspondence generated in an average workday, some information professionals propose retaining all of an organization's electronic documents regardless of importance rather than adopting the tedious process of appraisal.[3] Significantly, Stephens avoids this "save everything" philosophy, advocating that "[e]-mail should not be saved unless a legitimate business reason for doing so exists." Stephens invokes the distinction between *record* and *nonrecord* status that archivists will recall from the Petersons' important analysis of the subject.[4] Stephens argues that, to streamline records management programs, records managers must lead efforts within their organizations to articulate a clear policy that addresses which documents are considered records.

The two other methods of electronic communication Stephens discusses are instant messaging and digital voice messaging, or voice over Internet protocol. Again, Stephens departs from the "save everything" camp by recommending these tools (instant messaging in particular) as a way for businesses to communicate outside of the email environment. He acknowledges that VoIP has transformed voice mail into "just another digital object," but stops short of recommending its retention. Although *Records Management* was written prior to the current popularity of tools like Twitter and social networking sites, one can easily apply his standards to these and future tools as a way of reducing the amount of emails generated during the workday.

Much of the remainder of Stephens's book is left to an outline of ideal requirements of electronic recordkeeping systems, from client usability to database functionality. Demonstrating his deep understanding of search and indexing strategies, Stephens advocates for a hybrid approach to recordkeeping systems. One of the main advantages of electronic records, he

---

[3] A particularly provocative and pithy call for this approach can be found in Michael Daconta, "One Way to Solve the Federal Records Puzzle," *Government Computer News*, 4 February 2009, available at http://gcn.com/articles/2009/02/09/reality-check-the-records-puzzle.aspx, accessed 26 June 2009.

[4] Gary M. Peterson and Trudy Huskamp Peterson, *Archives and Manuscripts: Law* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1985), 13–16.

argues, is their full-text searchability. On the other hand, the establishment of an enterprise-wide classification system can help users target certain types of records before searching across them. Therefore, Stephens recommends records management systems that support both full-text searchability and the ability to organize records according to "hierarchical categories," commonly known to archivists as records series. Stephens references a number of compliance standards for recordkeeping systems, including the well-known DoD 5015.2-STD, also known as *Design Criteria for Electronic Records Management Software Applications.* He points the reader to the Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC) site, which certifies records management systems that comply with this standard. (He also references ANSI, NARA, and ISO standards throughout the book.) Cautioning that no one system will solve all of an organization's records management challenges, Stephens nevertheless recommends the DoD standard "as a baseline method against which products can be evaluated." Stephens closes his book with a review of best practices for database management and digital preservation.

Records Management is not without its drawbacks when read with an archivist's eye. Since his target audience is the records management community, Stephens often does not use "archives-speak" when describing concepts, which can take some getting used to. (On the other hand, many archivists may find this approach refreshing, as it gives us plainspoken talking points for communicating with stakeholders unfamiliar with our mystical arts.) Stephens is clearly writing for corporate records managers when he delves into topics such as liability, litigation, and privacy disclosures. And his otherwise thorough examination of records management systems fails to consider one question that the archives community considers crucial: if an organization wishes to switch systems, will the proprietary system it is currently using export data that looks the same way it did when first ingested?

However, on balance, *Records Management: Making the Transition from Paper to Electronic* should be regarded as an essential resource for explaining best practices for running records management programs that deal in both paper and digital formats. Each chapter has numerous endnotes, providing the reader with suggestions for additional reading. While he avoids the trap of advocating for one particular solution, Stephens does provide sample policies to help give the reader a dose of real-world context. A bibliography, organized by some of the major topics discussed, closes out the book. Reference tools like these make *Records Management* a resource suitable for the novice, an experienced archivist in need of an update, and even archival educators teaching electronic records management. Many archivists understandably fret about what to do about electronic records. Practical but not pedantic, *Records Management: Making the Transition from Paper to Electronic* provides many of us with a way forward.

© JORDON STEELE.
University of Pennsylvania Law School