

# Appraisal

Digital Stewardship Curriculum

# What is Appraisal?

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## SAA Definition:

“The process of determining whether records and other materials have permanent (archival) value. Appraisal may be done at the collection, creator, series, file, or item level.

# What is Appraisal?

- Identifying materials that are useful and valuable enough to have a place at your institution, in the long-term.
- The appraisal process happens within a larger context of your institution's policies and goals - collecting policy and mission statement.

# Why Conduct Appraisal?

- Lack of resources to accept and care for everything
- A step to select collections that are consistent with collecting policy

# Why Conduct Appraisal?

- Not all records/papers/items have archival value
- Might not be valuable to your institution/community
- Save what you can...move forward!

# When Does Appraisal Occur?

- Before accepting a collection
- During accessioning
- After it is already a collection at your institution - “Reappraisal”

# Cultural and Community Value

- What are the needs and priorities in the community you serve?
- How do your collections fit into these needs and priorities?
  - During Appraisal: Evaluate materials based on these measures of cultural and community value

# Other Definitions of “Value”

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- **Primary value: 1st life, value of the creator**
- **Secondary value: 2nd life, value to archive and researchers**



# More Kinds of “Value”

- **Informational value:** Usefulness of materials based solely on their content. Example: Census records to genealogists.

# More Kinds of “Value”

- **Evidential value:** provides information about the origins, functions, and activities of their creator. How a business was created, and how it functioned over a long period of time.

*What does the record tell you about the person that created it, their role, or society during the time?*

# More Kinds of “Value”

- **Intrinsic value:** Value that is unique to the original physical format of the record or object (aesthetic, historical, cultural, personal).

*Something that would be lost by only having a digital copy.*

# Other Considerations in Appraisal

- Cost
- Physical condition
- Order and completeness
- Authenticity/reliability

# Discussion

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How does your institution/your community measure value in a collection or object?