



Principles and Practice in Records Management and Archives

The Silence of the Archive

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Description

In recent years big data initiatives, not to mention Hollywood, the video game industry and countless other popular media, have reinforced and even glamorized the public image of the archive as the ultimate repository of facts and the hope of future generations for uncovering 'what actually happened'. The reality is, however, that for all sorts of reasons the record may not have been preserved or survived in the archive. In fact, the record may never have even existed – its creation being as imagined as is its contents. And even if it does exist, it may be silent on the salient facts, or it may obfuscate, mislead or flat out lie.

The Silence of the Archive is written by three expert and knowledgeable archivists and draws attention to the many limitations of archives and the inevitability of their having parameters.

Silences or gaps in archives range from details of individuals' lives to records of state oppression or of intelligence operations. The book brings together ideas from a wide range of fields, including contemporary history, family history research and Shakespearian studies. It describes why these silences exist, what the impact of them is, how researchers have responded to them, and what the silence of the archive means for researchers in the digital age. It will help provide a framework and context to their activities and enable them to better evaluate archives in a post-truth society.

This book includes discussion of:

- enforced silences
- expectations and when silence means silence
- digital preservation, authenticity and the future
- dealing with the silence
- possible solutions; challenging silence and acceptance
- the meaning of the silences: are things getting better or worse?

- user satisfaction and audience development.

This book will make compelling reading for professional archivists, records managers and records creators, postgraduate and undergraduate students of history, archives, librarianship and information studies, as well as academics and other users of archives.

Contents

Introduction to the Series – *Geoffrey Yeo*

About the authors

Foreword – *Anne J. Gilliland*

Introduction – *David Thomas*

1. Enforced silences – *Simon Fowler*

2. Inappropriate expectations – *Simon Fowler*

3. The digital – *David Thomas*

4. Dealing with the silence – *Valerie Johnson*

5. Imagining archives – *David Thomas*

6. Solutions to the silence – *Valerie Johnson*

7. Are things getting better or worse? – *David Thomas*

Index

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