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This study describes a content analysis of the consistency of information available on university archives and special collections websites of the institutions in the University of North Carolina system. Additionally, interviews were conducted with archivists at these universities to understand obstacles they face when posting content online. From the results a prioritized information model for university archives and special collections websites was developed.

Headings:

Access to Archives

University and College Archives

Websites

Interviews with Archivists

PRIORITIZATION OF INFORMATION: AN ARCHIVES WEBSITE CONTENT ANALYSIS AND INTERVIEWS TO MODEL THE PRIORITIZATION OF ONLINE CONTENT AVAILABILITY

by
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Introduction

University archives and special collections websites are a direct way for many patrons to learn about and interact with primary source materials. These websites inform a broad audience of a range of contact information, collection information, and the services available at that specific university. By providing the online access of digital collections and finding aids, university archives and special collections can reach and serve a variety of users.

This study explores the content made available through university archives and special collections websites within the UNC system. Since these public universities exist in the same university system, the hypothesis is that the types of content made available through their websites will be consistent. However, an analysis of the websites only highlights what features should be provided on these websites, and does not explain why certain elements are left out. To answer those questions, and provide additional context, I have also conducted interviews with the archivists posting the website content. These interviews gauge the archivists' attitudes towards their websites, and reveal their priorities in making content available online. The results are compared across website analyses and interviews to produce a prioritized model of information for university archivists and special collections librarians to reference when making content available online.

The following literature review will explore the topics of special collections and university archives, archival websites, and accessibility. Identifying special collections

and university archives are particularly important since these departments are often overlapped on university websites. The literature review sets the groundwork for developing the criteria by which I analyzed these websites.

Literature Review

University Archives and Special Collections

While many universities present special collections and university archives departments together, they serve different functions, which are important to identify. In an OCLC research survey of special collections and archives, Dooley defined special collections as:

“ ..library and archival materials in any format that are generally characterized by their artifactual or monetary value, physical format, uniqueness or rarity, and/or institutional commitment to long-term preservation and access.”

Dooley noted in the survey, that archival and manuscript materials, managed as collections, were combined with university archives, as many institutions manage them together (Dooley, 2010). While university archives and special collections materials are often managed together, university archives are defined differently, as they have a different purpose. Purcell defined university archives as “focused on collecting official records and historical materials about their institution from campus and off-campus sources” (Purcell, 2012). Purcell recognized that the definition of a university archivist is an evolving one, due to a variety of factors from technological advances and demands, to shrinking resources, and overlap into other fields.

While the distinction is made between the functions of university archives and special collections, universities and colleges often combine these departments in an

administrative and online presence. Since the websites explored in this study do not tend to separate the departments of university archives and special collections on their websites this study will consider them, and their online content, together.

Archive websites

Perez explored the content of all fifty US State Archive websites and found that online information about the services and the archives themselves were lacking. The state archives did not present consistent information across websites, which can confuse patrons (Perez, 2010). Many of the features that Perez used to examine state archives websites can be used to analyze the online information and services of university archives and special collections. Perez used content analysis to note when state archives websites provide contact information, social networking links, digital collections, and other general services in their websites. Perez also studied online finding aid services, and records management services available through state archives websites (Perez, 2010). Bromley's study into archival intelligence on archives websites also examined many of these features including instruction, contact information, and definitions of archival terms (Bromley, 2010).

Finding Aids

With the availability of online finding aids, researchers can more easily take advantage of archives and special collections for use in academic research, and in personal projects. “..anyone with an internet connection can presumably search for and find the Web site of an archives, access its available finding aids, and explore the collections” (Murray, 2009). Murray goes on to state that users who expect to find

catalogs or databases when searching archives online, often need explanation into how to use finding aids. Whenever users struggle with online finding aids, they could decide that the finding aids aren't useful for them, and no longer patronize the archives (Murray, 2009). Having usable finding aids available is consistently important for archives and special collections so that users have a view into their holdings.

Online finding aids are useful tools that many universities and archival institutions provide. Current finding aid literature focuses on how to provide users with a better online experience, and how to minimize confusion. Walton's usability study of Princeton's new finding aid website found that participants generally had positive experiences with them (Walton, 2017). From the participant feedback, Walton created a model for archivists to reference when taking steps towards improving their online finding aids. The model consists of ten suggestions ranging from using intuitive titles, to fully considering user preferences pertaining to Web 2.0 features (Walton, 2017). This continued search for a better user experience creates a more accessible environment for patrons.

Digital Collections

Online digital collections allow patrons to research materials remotely, and at any time of day. As highlighted by Green and Lampron's study, the accessibility of these materials are inspiring creative use, and reaching a variety of people. They surveyed the users of *Emblematica Online*, a digitization and curation project that provides online access to rare, primary source materials. The results of the survey showed that the resources available through *Emblematica Online* reached across several different

disciplines, such as Shakespeare studies, architecture, and music history. These digital materials also promoted unprecedented comparative analysis by bringing together archival materials that have been widely dispersed for much of their existence. The participants also noted the materials' usability in the classroom to inspire research, and ability to engage users with visual and textual aspects of the materials (Green and Lampron, 2017).

Dennison's study also highlights the diverse application of digital collections, with a look into how nursing students benefit from using online materials from the Royal Albert Hospital. The nursing students gained insight on the importance of person-centered care by researching the history of this hospital and long-stay institution for those with learning disabilities. The students participating in the course at the University of Cumbria noted that their experience with these archival materials would influence their future practice as nurses (Dennison, 2013).

Learning in the archives

In addition to using archival materials for research and education purposes, there is a considerable amount of learning about the archives themselves that takes place. Krause found that archivists spend a significant amount of time dedicated to instructing students, staff members, and local history groups on how the archive operates. Instruction appeared in many forms in Krause's study such as one-on-one meetings, presentations, and tours, with very few participants offering online instruction. Twenty percent of the archivists surveyed noted that they provided online tutorials, and forty-two percent provided online how-to instructions for users. During follow-up questions Krause noted that a quarter of the participants wanted to provide more online content for instruction

(Krause 2008). Krause also noted the obstacles that archivists face in providing instruction included lack of support, and lack of funding.

In addition to exploring instruction services, educational and informative resources are also considered a promotion of Archival Intelligence. Archival Intelligence, as characterized in Bromley's paper, is a model of teaching new patrons how to become expert users of archival repositories. Bromley's analysis finds that while Archival Intelligence can be promoted through website content, most archival websites did not provide enough of the needed elements. Some of the crucial elements missing from websites were definitions of terms like "archival repositories", and "finding aids", as well as instructions on "How to do Research". By offering users instruction through guides on research and definitions of archival concepts, archives and special collections can promote Archival Intelligence.

Records management

Records Management is an important service that is often directed by the university archivist. The records that university archivists and record managers hold contribute to the history of the university and are said to have archival value. The Society of American Archivists defines archival value as "The ongoing usefulness or significance of records, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain, justifying their continued preservation" (Society of American Archivists).

To aid staff and faculty in the managing of records created by the university, the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources of North Carolina published a records retention and disposition schedule (Files.nc.gov, 2018). This schedule lists records commonly found in University offices, assesses of their value, and informs the records

manager when and if they should be destroyed. Should any of the records retain archival value, the University Archivist retains them. According to general statutes G.S. § 121-5 and G.S. § 132-3, public universities may only destroy the records created by their universities with consent from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The schedule also notes that universities may have campus-specific schedules, and that the general schedule does not supersede it without direction from the chancellor, university archivist or records manager (Files.nc.gov, 2018).

Electronically created or electronically stored university records also fall within the North Carolina General Assembly's definition of public records, and should also be evaluated for archival value. Zach and Peri focused on electronic records management (ERM) in their studies, determining and comparing records management programs nationwide. They surveyed university archivists and records managers, and then surveyed again after five years to compare changes in ERM policies and programs. They found that 49.7% of participants had formal ERM plans from the first survey and 49.2% had formal policies from the second survey. Their results, they suggested, noted a lack of recognition of importance for electronic records management (Zach and Peri, 2010).

Contact Information

To effectively communicate with users, archives and special collections typically provide their general contact information on their websites. It is important for these websites to list this information, as it might be unavailable through other webpages. Bromley added the category of general contact information in his study on Archival Intelligence in websites, to find if repositories gave the users enough information to begin their research. Contact information, as noted by Bromley, can exist as working hours,

directions, email addresses, mailing addresses, phone contacts and instant messaging services. He found that most archival websites surveyed provided these contact points, however only seven percent of websites provided instant messaging or chat features (Bromley, 2010).

While instant messaging was the least popular method of communication in Bromley's study, Murray notes that this is an increasingly popular service acting as a real-time online reference tool (Murray, 2009). Contact information is one of the key components that users look for when attempting to engage with the archives. Providing this information allows the user to begin engaging with primary materials and the archives.

Accessibility

Examining the content of university archives and special collections websites is an important area to study to highlight how providing certain information to the public embraces accessibility. Accessibility refers to how materials are made available on the websites of archives, and also how the archives websites can be utilized to benefit the community.

In investigating how archival websites provide accessibility, Davis examined the website accessibility of repositories belonging to Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL). Her study specifically focuses on accessibility of archival materials to those with disabilities, a regularly underserved population. The PACSCL study focused specifically on website accessibility for those with visual impairment. Davis found that the repositories in this area, while they scored reasonably well, when compared to sites like Facebook, did contain significant errors. Graphical

links, failure to provide text alternatives to slideshows, and insufficient color contrast were common errors found that prevented accessibility. Davis's findings demonstrate that accessibility within websites is not as simple as testing them against an auto-compliance checker, but requires thoughtfulness at the creation of the site itself (Davis 2012).

Shelstad's study of the redesign of the website for the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center revealed the importance in focusing on content availability, content integrity, and regular website maintenance (Shelstad, 2005). He also noted that consulting users promoted success of the website as the users directly noted issues with accessibility and the usability of the website. User testing better equips archivists to provide the content that users seek from archival websites.

Social Media

One way of promoting the accessibility of information and services of university archives and special collection websites is through social media. Creating social media accounts is a cost-effective, though not cost-free, way to reach new audiences (Heyliger et al, 2013). Heyliger et al. surveyed special collections' use of social media as an outreach tool and found that use varied widely depending on the platform and the institution type. They also found that special collections intentionally used different social media platforms to reach different audiences and often tailored their posts accordingly. Special collections in this study found that by posting regularly to social media, they were able to increase overall viewership, although the definition of "regular" differed by platform. As social media becomes the primary tool for outreach, it makes more sense for repositories to adopt these platforms (Heyliger, 2013). Heyliger et al. also

warned that special collections should thoroughly consider the strengths, weaknesses and maintenance required before recklessly adopting social media platforms (Heyliger et al., 2013).

Implications

This paper aims to emphasize the importance of publishing updated, accurate, and informative materials to archival websites, as promoting information helps better prepare users on how to benefit from the archives. “By continuing to strive for improved virtual access of information to information about our repositories...future generations of abled and disabled patrons will reap countless benefits” (Davis, 2012).

While it can be difficult to determine and measure the direct effects of providing information through archival websites, there have been a few attempts. Patterson looked into the effects that the Internet technology has had on the public’s perception on archives overall. Her study highlights a struggle that archivists have always faced, knowing what users want. Determining user needs is difficult, as they are not always adept at expressing their research wants and needs. The study results showed that with the rise of the Internet, users expect complete information access online, which is unobtainable for most archives (Patterson, 2012). While the rise of the Internet has provided university archives and special collections a direct way to reach audiences, the obstacles of creating accessibility are often overlooked.

Conclusion

This literature review has touched on university archives and special collections, archival websites, and the issues of accessibility. Additionally, this review noted that there are several factors that can affect what information is published to archival websites. While more materials and archival information are becoming digitally accessible, the public's expectations are also growing. Special Collections and University Archives departments' ability to provide to their audiences will rest largely upon their ability to provide accessibility of information and services.

Through this literature review, the categories by which the websites were analyzed are highlighted. By making content from each of these categories available through their websites, university archives and special collections can provide a researcher with a well-rounded view of the information and services offered.

From this literature review, I developed several categories of criteria to look for on the websites analyzed. General Contact Information, Outreach and Social Networking, Collection Information, Digital Collections, Informational and Instructional Materials, Records Management, and Internal Policies and Procedures. Additionally, speaking with university archivists clarifies the specific obstacles and prioritizations that cause archival websites to publish the certain information.

Methodology

Website Analysis

I studied each of the university archives and special collections library websites of the public universities within the UNC system. The UNC system also hosts a public

residential high school, which was not included in this study. The university web addresses were obtained from the University of North Carolina System website, “Our 17 Campuses” (OUR 17 CAMPUSES). From the university web pages, I navigated to the special collections and university archives pages, which are noted in Appendix B.

This study focuses on the websites of UNC university archives, as well as the special collections departments. The websites were analyzed, in Fall 2017, using the categories of information and services developed in the Literature Review.

- General Contact Information
- Outreach/Social Networking
- Collection Information
- Digital Collections
- Informational/Instructional Materials
- Records Management
- Internal Policies and Procedures

Since universities interpret these criteria differently, it is important to further define the elements that are the focus of the website analysis.

General Contact Information:

Phone Number: A general phone number provided specifically for the Special Collections and/or University Archives departments.

Address: An address specifically for the special collections and university archives departments.

Campus Map: Map to the archives and special collections linked or embedded within website.

Additional Directions: Additional Directions are defined as directions provided in addition to an address, or campus map. Includes directions to the departments through the library, floor plans for the library and departments, and directions to the library from parking areas.

Hours of Operation: Hours of Operation for the special collections and university archives.

Email Address: Listed email address for audiences to use to contact the special collections and university archives departments.

Email Portal: Portal on website used to communicate with the special collections and archives staff via email. Sometimes used instead of providing an email address.

Staff Directory: Directory of Staff working in the university's special collections and university archives. Directories are counted if they are linked or embedded on the special collections and university archives website.

Instant Messaging/Chat Feature: A feature wherein users directly message and have real-time online conversations with an archivist.

Outreach and Social Networking:

Social Networking accounts were counted when linked through surveyed websites.

Twitter account: Twitter icon or hyperlink for patrons to access the special collections and university archives Twitter account.

Facebook account: Facebook icon or hyperlink for patrons to access the special collections and university archives Facebook account.

Youtube Channel: Youtube icon or hyperlink for patrons to access the special collections and university archives Youtube account.

Tumblr account: Tumblr icon or hyperlink for patrons to access the special collections and university archives Tumblr account.

Instagram account: Instagram icon or hyperlink for patrons to access the special collections and university archives Instagram account.

Flickr account: Flickr icon or hyperlink for patrons to access the special collections and university archives Flickr account.

Event Calendar: Displayed, or hyperlinked calendar that displays the events put on by the special collections and university archives departments.

Blog: Blog icon hyperlink for patrons to use to access the blog posts of the special collections and university archives departments.

Collection Information:

Finding Aids/Description: Described by the Society of American Archivists (SAA) as “a tool that facilitates discovery of information within a collection of records” (“Finding Aid”). The SAA also notes that finding aids come in a wide variety of formats, including lists, guides, inventories and more.

Subject Guide: The subject guides sort the finding aids by the subject of their content instead of by their collection. This allows a researcher to see similar subject information across collections.

Digital Collections:

While not every university sorts their collections based on these formats, digital collections were counted when they contained materials in these categories.

Photographs: Digitized as well as born-digital photographs made available through the digital collections were counted for this study.

Manuscripts: Digitized copies of manuscripts, as well as born-digital manuscripts made available through the digital collections were counted for this study.

Digital Exhibits: Digital exhibits, also known as web exhibits, are associated webpages that takes a deeper dive, or creative look into artifacts, important subjects, and persons of interest.

Oral Histories: Oral histories are interviews that are recorded to capture a unique perspective from persons affiliated with the university, or surrounding area and culture. Websites providing availability of either video files or audio-only files were counted for this study.

Informational and Instructional Materials:

Using Materials for Education: These elements are often described as Instructional Programs, and are counted whenever instruction services are offered to institutional instructors.

How to Use Collections: This section introduces new researchers to how university archives and special collections work at that specific location.

Records Management:

Retention and Disposition Schedule: Embedded or hyperlink to the Retention and Disposition schedule put in place by the North Carolina State Archives. In 2018, a new schedule was released, however, this data was gathered prior to the new schedule release date, and the previous schedule was counted when made available. (“General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule”, 2007).

Institution Retention and Disposition Schedule: These institution specific retention and disposition schedules are created individually and used either in place of, or in addition to the General Records Schedule provided by the State Archives of North Carolina

Records Management: The definition and explanation of transferring records to the university archives, or other responsible office, for records retention.

Internal Policies and Procedures:

Copyright Policies: The copyright policies and obligations that the special collections and university archives uphold. As well as the copyright responsibilities that the users are required to uphold and obey.

Reading Room Policies: Policies put in place on how the patrons should behave in the reading room, for the protection of the artifacts handled.

Vision/Mission Statement: The vision and/or mission statement of the special collections and university archives describes the core mission, and guiding principles of the department. These statements guide how the special collections

and university archives departments present themselves, as well as how and what materials are collected.

Publication Policies: Publication policies outline the permissions needed to publish the materials from the Special Collections and University Archives departments.

Request Form for Publication: Form provided to patrons to request permission to publish or present materials from the special collections and university archives.

Fully Online Registration: The ability for the patrons to register as researchers with the universities, in a fully online domain.

Registration Form: A form provided to users and patrons, to register as researchers with the institution.

Reproduction Services Defined: Often, institutions allow differing levels of reproduction to patrons, including but not limited to: self-scanning and printing of materials, staff-only reproductions, pay-for reproductions, and mailed reproductions. For a researcher or patron, it can be helpful to understand how the reproduction services operate at specific universities.

Reproduction Services Offered: Reproduction services are offered researchers by allowing them to create copies of materials, or mandating that staff perform reproduction services.

Donation Guide: Guides that illustrate to donors the types, and subjects of materials accepted into the special collections and university archives. Guides can include instructions and details regarding monetary donations.

Donor Agreement Form: Form for those who wish to donate materials to the Special Collections and University Archives. Donor Agreement Forms often detail the ownership and copyright rules of the materials after their transfer to the university. Making these available through the website allows donors to view commitments before donation.

Content analysis was used to analyze the information and materials made available through the special collections and university archives websites. Through spreadsheets, I noted whether the website contained the above elements, as well as noted where in the website the information was offered.

Interviews

To add context to the content gathered and analyzed from the university archives websites, this study also incorporates interviews with university archivists and special collections librarians. These interviews help explain the “why” to the “what” already explored in the content analysis of existing websites.

Since the population of university archivists and special collections archivists within the UNC university system is relatively small, each of the universities were contacted directly through publicly available email addresses. These interviews were performed in Spring 2018.

The university archivists and special collections librarians are located all across the state of North Carolina, so at the convenience of the individual archivists, interviews were conducted via phone call, Skype session, or in person. The interviews were conducted with the same set of questions, as noted in Appendix A, in a semi-structured

manner. The semi-structured interview style allowed me to expand and explain questions and allowed me to alter the order as appropriate to the interview (Wildemuth, 2016).

The interview questions were focused into the categories below:

- General Website Information
- General Contact Information
- Outreach and Social Networking
- Collection Information
- Educational and Instructional Materials
- Records Management
- Websites Design and Testing
- Obstacles and Additional Issues

The interviews answers were transcribed, and then coded to better view recurring themes within the interview itself, as well as to compare themes across interviews. The themes were allowed to develop from the data in an inductive qualitative analysis (Wildemuth, 2016). The themes that arose were then used to develop the prioritization of information model (Figure 8).

Results

Website Analysis

The content analysis of the special collections and university archives websites show mixed results in the amount of content made available. While none of the websites were completely deficient in providing content through their websites, most universities

did not provide content from each of the categories previously described in the Methods Section. Only seven of the universities surveyed provided content for each of the categories: Appalachian State University, North Carolina State University, UNC Asheville, UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Charlotte, UNC Greensboro, UNC Wilmington. The remaining websites commly neglected to share content in Social Media, Informational and Instructional Services, and Records Management.

General Contact Information

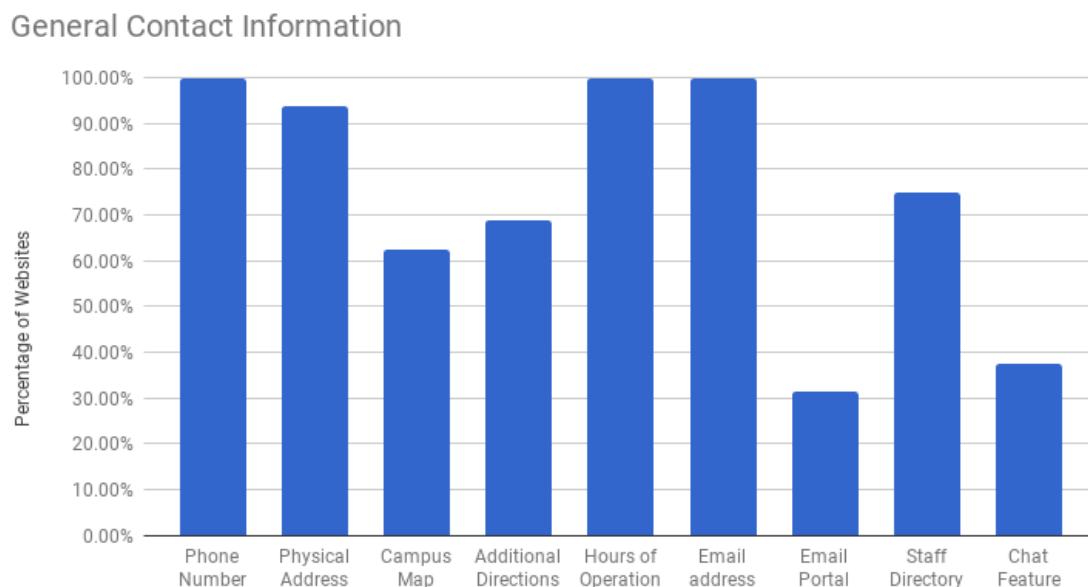


Figure 1: Percentage of Sites Providing Contact Information

Contact Information, as it allows users to communicate with the archives and special collections department, is often one of the most consistent pieces of content provided to patrons. Overall these departments recognize the importance of providing general contact information through their websites. This recognition is reflected in the high rates of participation in each of the criteria.

Each of the 16 universities (100%) provided phone numbers for their departments, or to individuals within the departments. These phone numbers were most often found on the main special collections page, on related “About Us” and “Contact Us” pages, and occasionally throughout the whole of the website.

Nearly all of the universities (93.75%) listed an address to the special collections and university archives. Researchers visiting the archives in person, or sending requests use these addresses. Again, this information is often found on the main web page, or included in an “About Us” or “Contact Us” section. Western Carolina University is the only university surveyed not currently displaying their address.

Campus maps were made available at ten (62.50%) of the sixteen university websites surveyed. These maps are useful for researchers to find their way to the archival holdings, especially those researchers not familiar with the universities.

In addition to campus maps, providing additional directions can help notify researchers and patrons of unique locations for archival holdings. Overall eleven (68.75%) universities provided additional directions and instructions for finding their special collections and university archives departments. Of these eleven universities providing directions, two of them had not provided campus maps through their websites. NC Central University was the only university website to provide a campus map with no additional directions to the collections.

Each of the university websites surveyed (100%) provided hours of operation to the audiences. This feature notifies researchers when they are allowed to visit the reading room to see the materials. The hours of operation were often found on the main web pages, or located under “Hours” or “Plan Your Visit” sections.

Email addresses were expectedly a popular point of contact to provide to online users, with all (100%) of websites providing them. These email addresses were often labeled as general contacts for the departments, however several universities provided email addresses connecting users directly with archivists.

Email portals, while not necessary contact elements, can be helpful as a direct communication tools, used by universities. Out of the universities surveyed here, only five (31.25%) utilized email portals. These portals can be set up in a form for universities, which allows these departments to gather specific information from the contacts. For example, the North Carolina State University email portal asks for Name, Phone Number, Status with NC State, Subject Matter, and Location in addition to the Question or Request. This additional information can be incredibly helpful for those answering emails, and ensures that researchers and patrons don't forget to mention key elements in a regular email.

Staff directories can be helpful for researchers when they need to contact someone specific in the special collections or university archives departments. Out of the institutions involved in this study, twelve (75%) universities provided access to staff directories. These directories were often dedicated just to the special collection and university archives departments, but were also often related to the library overall. In larger directories the archival staff are noted in their titles or are separated by their departments.

Chat Features had the second lowest participation rates in the general contact information category, with only six universities (37.50%) providing this feature. This feature allows users to directly communicate with an archivist in real time concerning the

collections. While this feature is not essential for department contact information, its use can often save time in answering emails. However this feature requires significant supervision and management from archivists and librarians.

Outreach/Social Networking

Outreach/Social Networking

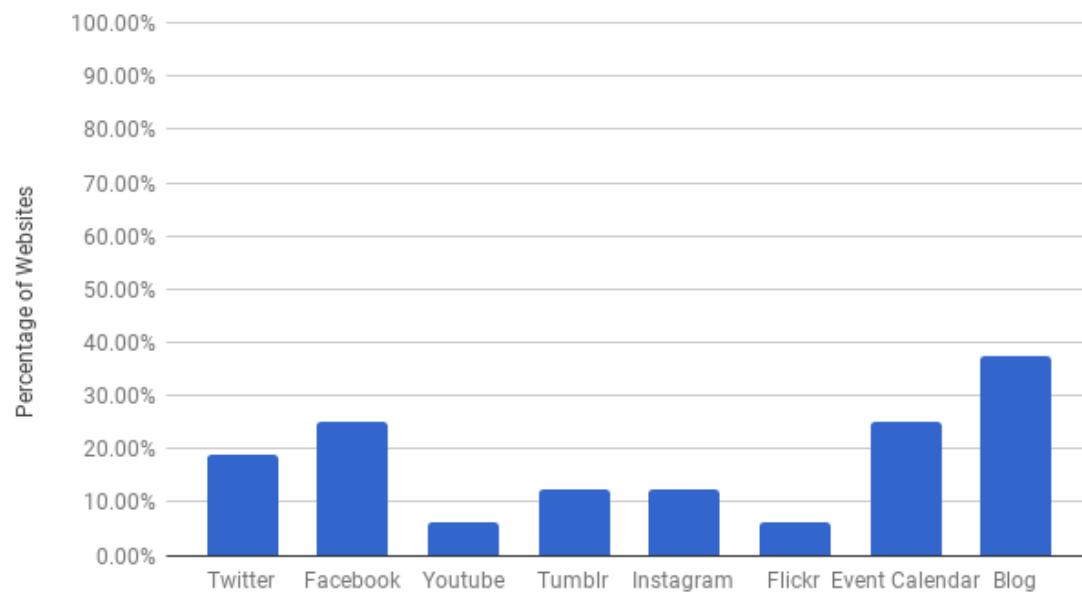


Figure 2: Percentage of Sites Providing Links to Social Media Accounts

While it is by no means required for university archives and special collections to connect with users through social media, it can be a useful tool. Social media accounts can be used to inform researchers of events happening at the university, increase visibility, and showcase interesting materials from the collections.

In surveying the social media accounts promoted through the special collections and university archives departments, there were some unique discoveries. UNC Chapel Hill's special collection website was uncommon in that the major collections held there,

The North Carolina Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, Rare Book Collection, The Southern Historical Collection, the University Archives and Records Management Services, all seem to have their own social media accounts, which was not found in the other websites. These instances will be expanded up on when encountered for the individual criteria.

Overall, social media accounts are generally promoted through the websites through icon links posted to the front page of the special collection and university archives websites. Nine (56.25%) of the universities participated in social media, and outreach as described above. There were seven (43.75%) universities, from the ones surveyed, that did not present any link to possible social media accounts, and five (31.25%) universities provided access to only one social media account.

While Twitter exists as a popular social media account for students to participate in, only three (18.75%) of the universities surveyed engaged in outreach through Twitter. With the multiple departments within UNC Chapel Hill's special collections, three out of their five departments engage in separate Twitter accounts to keep patrons up to date on collections and events surrounding those departments.

Facebook was the most popular social media account used by special collections and university archives in the UNC system, with four (25%) universities participating. UNC Chapel Hill's University Archives, Southern Folklife Collection, North Carolina Collection, and Southern Historical Collection all have separate Facebook accounts to reach interested audiences.

Several of the websites surveyed for this study showed links to Youtube accounts. However, these accounts were primarily found linked through the University banners on

the special collections and university archives websites, and linked to university accounts. Only UNC Greensboro linked to an account specifically for special collections and university archives.

Out of the 16 universities surveyed, only two (12.50%) participated in the social media website Tumblr. UNC Greensboro uses Tumblr to highlight different collections by posting unique manuscripts and materials giving their audience a first-hand look into their collections. Similarly, UNC Charlotte promotes their collections by posting photographs that can be printed and colored, as well as presenting posts focusing on current events such as Black History Month, and the passing of Billy Graham.

There were two (12.50%) universities who promoted Instagram accounts through their websites, UNC Chapel Hill's University Archives, and Western Carolina University. These accounts can be additionally helpful to highlight collections that are relevant to topics of the day, as well as to showcase unique and interesting materials.

Only one (6.25%) university, UNC Greensboro, provided a link to a Flickr account through their special collections website. This account's website provided photographs of exhibits, events, as well as manuscripts held in the collections.

In addition to social media accounts, several universities also reached out to their audiences through event calendars. These calendars notify audiences of speakers and special events that can occur with special collections or university archives. Four universities (25%) of the universities surveyed made event calendars available through their websites.

Collection Information

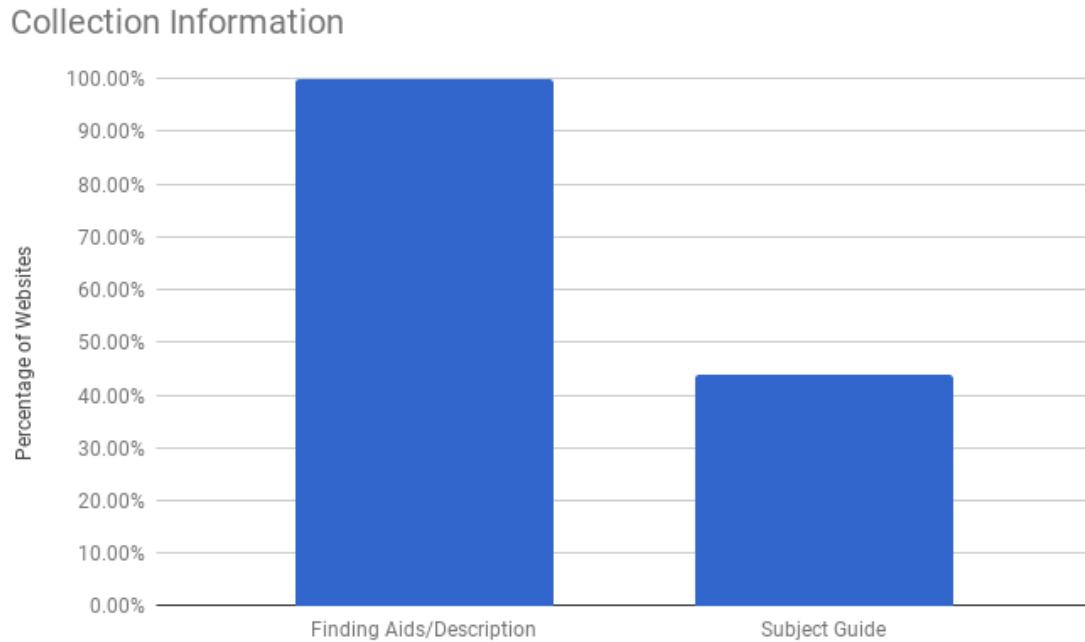


Figure 3: Percentage of Sites Providing Collection Information

A wide variety of finding aids were considered when analyzing the websites of the sixteen universities in the UNC system. All of the universities (100%) provided finding aids through the use of lists, searchable guides, and inventories. These universities clearly show that they value finding aids as valuable ways to let audiences know what materials are kept within their holdings.

Subject Guides, were not seen within all sixteen university websites, only garnering participation from seven (43.75%) universities. Subject guides can be helpful for researchers and patrons who are searching for materials based on subject also allowing them to see and compare material holdings across collections.

Digital Collections

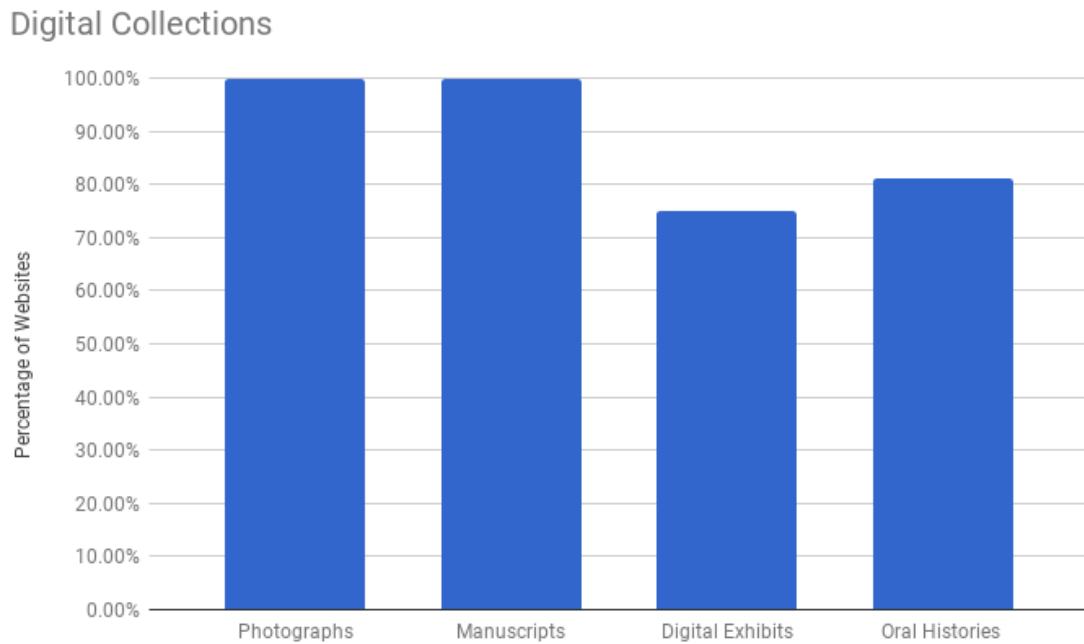


Figure 4: Percentage of Sites Providing Digital Collections

While not all universities sorted their digital collections based on the format of the materials, the universities surveyed all provided some digital materials for remote use. These digital materials are generally displayed on archival websites through photographs, manuscripts, digital exhibits and oral histories.

All of the universities surveyed here (100%) were found to provide digital materials in the forms of photographs and manuscripts. Digital materials are valuable resources, allowing for researchers to see materials remotely, as well as reducing wear and tear on the original copy.

Twelve (75%) universities provided access to Digital and Web Exhibits. These exhibits are individual websites created to more fully explore topics and collections supported through the use of primary, digital materials.

Oral histories are also a popular way to capture digital materials, with thirteen universities providing access to oral histories. Oral history recordings, audio or video, are collections of digital stories related to the university, and local histories.

Instructional Materials

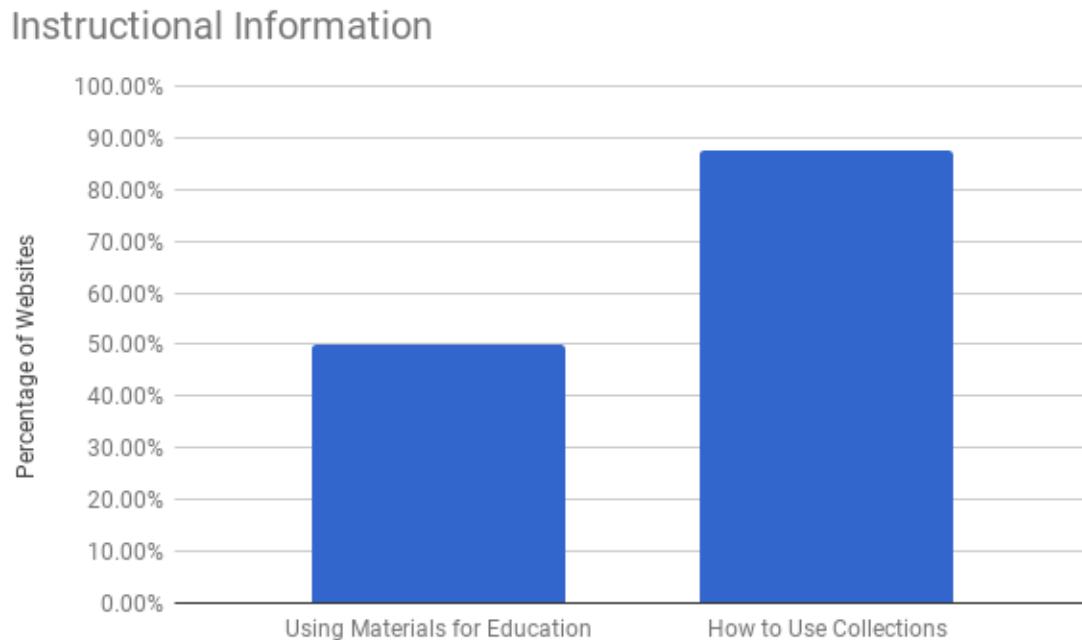


Figure 5: Percentage of Sites Providing Informational and Instructional Materials

Informational and Instructional materials were explored on the university websites in different ways: Using Materials for Education that explore instruction offerings, and How to Best use the Collections of that specific university archive or

special collection. UNC Pembroke and NC A&T University did not display any of these materials through their websites.

Eight (50%) of the university websites surveyed for this study provided information on setting up instructional sessions with the university archives or special collections. Through instruction requests, classroom instructors can introduce students to primary document research.

Fourteen (87.50%) of the university archives and special collections websites surveyed, provided information on how to use the collections. Patrons can find this information on “Planning Your Visit” pages, and “About” pages. For example, UNC Wilmington’s “About UNCW Archives” webpage provides a step-by-step process on “How to Find Information in University Archives”.

Records Management

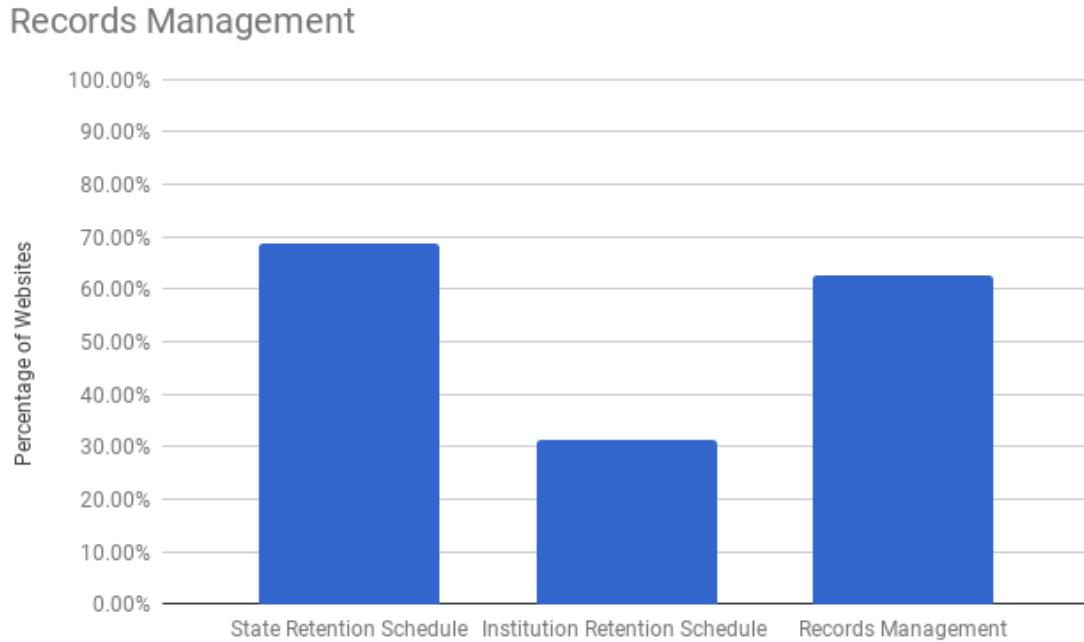


Figure 6: Percentage of Sites Providing Records Management Information

Records Management in universities is often handled through University Archives departments. These departments apply either the North Carolina Retention and Disposition schedule or an individual retention schedule. University archives, and other records management offices, also implement additional policies, and define records management for their specific university.

The North Carolina Archives provides a General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule for the public universities to use when managing the records in their offices. Eleven (68.75%) of the surveyed universities embedded or shared the link to this retention schedule on their websites. The availability of this retention schedule, or an institution specific schedule is important for offices to evaluate their inactive records for storage or destruction. Among the universities not reflecting the state archives records

retention and disposition schedule are those who have created their own, fully independent retention policies.

While not required, some universities have found it helpful to create additional policies to manage their records. Overall, five universities (31.25%) have created additional, institution-level schedules to help evaluate their records. These records policies can be utilized to address retention questions not covered in the state archive's General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.

Some university archivists and records managers have found it helpful to more fully define and describe records management for their internal audiences. Ten (62.50%) of universities surveyed provided descriptions and definitions of records management through their University Archives websites.

Policies and Procedures

Internal Policies/Procedures

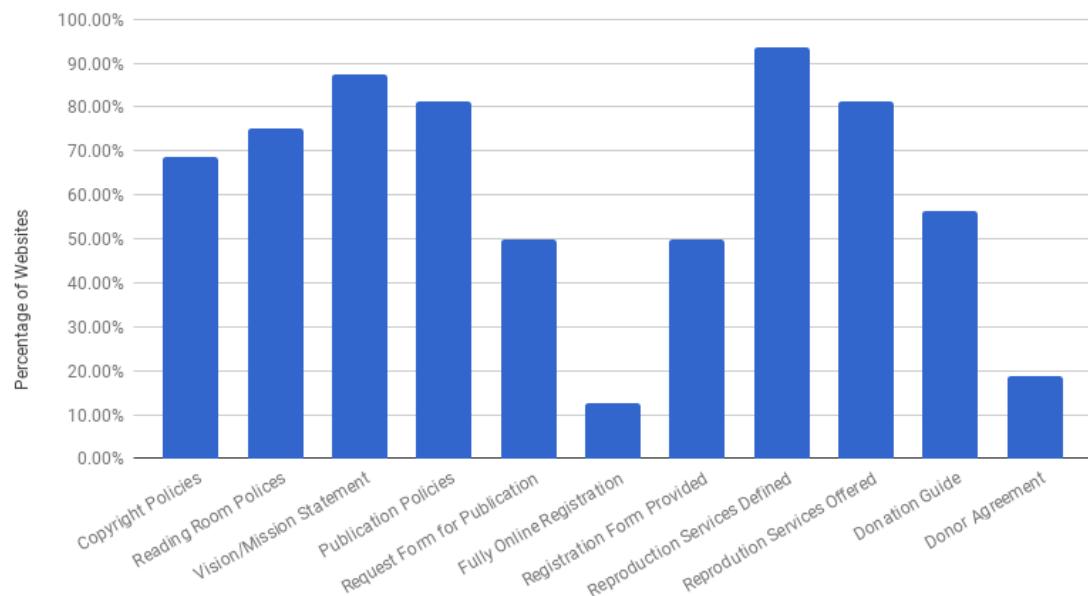


Figure 7: Percentage of Sites Providing Internal Policies and Procedures

Internal Policies and Procedures are a relatively wide category of criteria for the sixteen universities to show to their audiences. All of the sixteen universities (100%) provided some sort Internal Policy and Procedures to the audience ranging from: copyright policies, reading room policies, vision or mission statement, publication policies, reproduction services, and donor information.

Internal Policies and Procedures are a relatively wide category of criteria for the sixteen universities to show to their audiences. All of the sixteen universities (100%) provided some sort Internal Policy and Procedures to the audience ranging from: copyright policies, reading room policies, vision or mission statement, publication policies, reproduction services, and donor information. Providing this information to online users, can help to articulate the specific rules and regulations they will need to follow when doing research when researching at these universities.

Eleven (68.75%) of the university websites surveyed in this study included information concerning copyright policies. Many of these copyright information sections were contained within other sections on the website, such as Duplication Policies. On several websites, copyright information was noted to be specific to the individual collections, as the universities did not always hold copyright to the materials. This is evident on Western Carolina University's website, as well as UNC School of the Arts' website.

Reading Room Policies were published to university archives and special collections websites by twelve (75%) of the universities surveyed. These policies often touch similar issues, such as having personal items in the reading room, laptop permissibility, and requesting materials through the Service Desk. UNC Charlotte went

further, noting protocols for researchers taking phone calls, so as not to disturb fellow patrons. Other universities also inform patrons on how to register, and what information they should bring on their visit to the reading room.

Fourteen (87.50%) of the universities surveyed provided a Vision or Mission Statement for the special collections and university archives departments. Providing a mission statement not only allows the departments develop a focus for their collections, but allows the departments to create goals, while relaying these focuses and goals to the patron. These mission statements are often found on the main web pages of the special collections and university archives websites.

Publication policies were often addressed on these university archives and special collections websites, with thirteen (81.25%) universities providing this element. These policies typically include specifications on completing a request form for publication, which was provided by eight (50%) of the universities surveyed. These forms can be completed remotely and mailed, faxed, emailed, or presented in-person to the institution, which can then approve the publishing of materials from the collection.

Many of the universities note that researchers are required to register with the service desk upon visiting the reading room and handling primary source materials. However, only eight (50%) of the universities surveyed provide a registration form online for users to view and complete before visiting the reading room. These forms can provide the user with additional information specific information regarding the reading room.

An alternative to providing the registration form, is the fully online registration, currently provided by two (12.50%) of the universities surveyed for this study. UNC Chapel Hill and East Carolina University both provide an online registration portal for

researchers. UNC Chapel Hill made their registration link available through the main page of their special collections, while East Carolina University made their link available through the ‘Plan Your Visit to Our Special Collections’ web page.

Reproduction Services often vary in definition from university to university, and can include restrictions on who creates the copies for the user, how the copies can be used, and what collections may or may not be reproduced. Overall, fifteen (93.75%) of the university websites surveyed here provided their users with explanations of what reproductions services look like through their special collections and university archives. The NC A&T University special collection and university archive web page was the only university in this survey to not provide reproduction information. Dictating who could create the copy was the one of the main focuses in reproduction services. Thirteen (81.25%) of the universities surveyed either offered or mandated that the attending archivist create reproductions.

Nine (56.25%) universities, surveyed in this study, provided the potential donor with an online guide describing the types and focuses of materials they accept as donations. Universities providing this information online help potential donors decide which institution should receive the donation. Several websites also note which materials they do not collect, such as NC A&T, who noted that they do not accept regalia, personal memorabilia, or works of art as archival donations. Additionally, only three (18.75%) of universities providing donor guides also supplied agreement forms for donors to complete in advance.

Interviews

Initially, I asked the participants questions concerning general information about their university archives and special collection websites. All of the participants identified their primary audiences as students and researchers. Gwynn Thayer, with North Carolina State University, further explained that "researcher" is a broad term, noting that researchers can come from other states and countries, for personal or professional research. Staff and Faculty were noted by half of the interviewees as important audiences. Donors and Alumni were also individually noted as significant audiences.

The interviewees all identified collection information, digital collections, and general contact information as essential elements to be included on university and special collections websites. Two of the four interviewees (50%) recognized information on services provided, and history of the university as important details to include on their websites. Additionally, the interviewees highlighted "Digital Exhibits", "Social Media", and a "Calendar of Events", as primary elements to include through their websites.

In addition to noting the general contact information availability through the website analysis, I also asked about contact information in the interviews. The participants all agreed that email addresses and phone numbers were the highest priority of information to include on their websites. Three of interviewees mentioned that hours of operation were incredibly important to provide and update through their websites.

Gwynn Thayer and Todd Kosmerick, of North Carolina State University, noted specifically that hours of operation are often updated depending on various events, holidays and weather issues. They also uniquely mentioned that it is important to provide contact information and general guidelines for donors. All of the participants

answered that their current websites provided the most up-to-date contact information for their audiences to access.

UNC School of the Arts was the institution interviewed that does not currently participate in any social media accounts. However, as I found in the website analysis, there are several university archives and special collection departments in this study that do not participate in social media. The other interviewees participated in social media, engaging with audiences through blogs, Facebook accounts, and Twitter accounts. UNC Charlotte's Special Collection and University Archives department also has a Tumblr account, setting them apart from the other interviewees. Two of the interviewees mentioned that creating an Instagram account would be a beneficial next step in developing their social media outreach. Interviewees acknowledged that these social media accounts take considerable time to manage. Additionally, Jon McNeil, with the UNC School of the Arts, noted that since many of their students are not yet eighteen years old, participating in social media causes a gray area for privacy, copyright and ownership.

I then asked the interviewees questions concerning their satisfaction with their collection information on their websites. Only one participant noted that their complete satisfaction with their current finding aids available on their website. The other interviewees explained that their finding aids were soon to be redone, or that they were looking into how to improve upon the user experience. These interviewees explained that there were always discussions on how to improve upon finding aids, even if they currently operate satisfactorily.

The digital collections found in the website analysis ranged from small collections of materials on the webpage, to large searchable databases. Considering such a large variety of formats, I asked the interviewees about their satisfaction with their current digital collections. Each of the interviewees noted different changes that they would like to see made to their digital collections. Jon McNeil, with UNC-School of the Arts, explained their department's desire for a better-detailed list of credentials of the cast and crew involved in performances posted online. Gene Hyde, with UNC-Asheville, explained that his department would like to move to a hosting platform better suited for their "small shop". Dawn Schmitz, with UNC-Charlotte, noted that their digital collections are currently in transition from two different platforms, to an Islandora platform. Gwynn Thayer and Todd Kosmerick, with NC State University, mentioned that while they were satisfied with their current digital collections, their department is constantly thinking about how to improve tools for users.

Two of the interviewees noted that their websites provided comprehensive records management information. The others mentioned that they either weren't sure of the comprehensiveness of their website in this regard, or that their departments were not in charge of university records. Additionally, the interviewees from both UNC School of the Arts and UNC Asheville, did not follow any additional retention policies other than the General Retention and Disposition Schedule. NC State University has created their own retention schedule, and UNC Charlotte is currently drafting supplementary policies concerning faculty papers.

I then asked the interviewees about their website design and user testing availability. User testing was noted as available at two of the universities, while the

others either consulted with website design teams, or were planning to incorporate user testing into their further designs. Two of the interviewees noted that they were planning on updating the design to their websites in the future, to better serve users, noting usability testing as a priority moving forward.

The interviewees from UNC School of the Arts, UNC Asheville, and NC State University noted that copyright, privacy, and security were all consistent issues faced when publishing online. Additional obstacles mentioned by the interviewees were depending on other departments to publish materials, working with a small staff, limited time to devote to website maintenance and social media, as well as working with legacy files and systems.

Prioritized Information Model

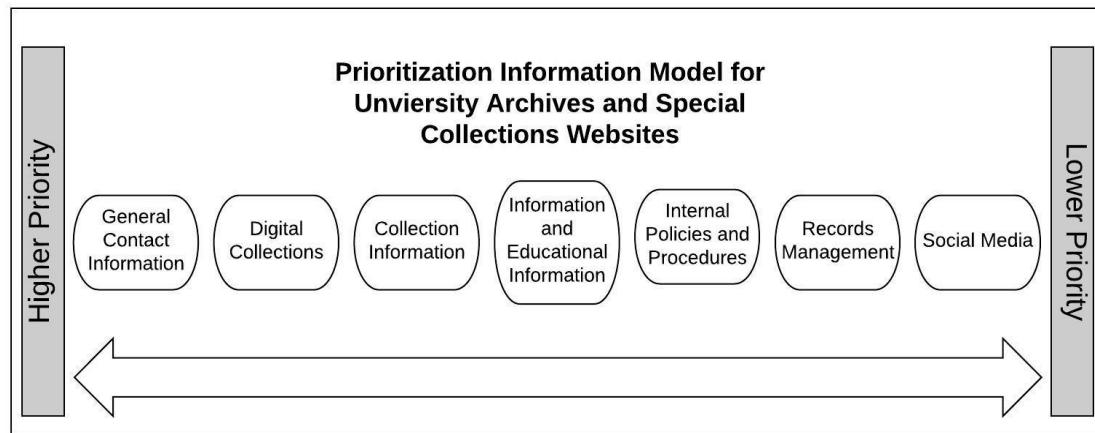


Figure 8: Prioritized Information Model for Websites

Comparing the data collected from the website analysis with the data collected in the interviews, a natural prioritization of information emerged. The interviewees highlighted the categories and individual elements that they felt were the high priorities

for their department's website. The interviewees indicated their main information providing focuses were in General Contact Information, Digital Collections and Collection Information. These criteria were determined based on a combination of the data from the website analysis and the information gathered from the interviews. The universities surveyed participated least in social media promotion. The low participation rates in social media were also reflected in the interviews, with several interviewees noting that they did not have the time or staff to manage social media accounts. This model (Figure 8) places the categories of information and services on a spectrum ranging from high prioritization to low prioritization. The higher prioritized elements appear to be the most important elements to include on a university archives or special collections website. The lower prioritized elements, while still important, are less crucial to the website, and their investment can be reserved for a time when more resources are available.

Discussion

The interview and website analysis results show that content on archival and special collection websites, within the UNC system, are inconsistent. A researcher working with multiple institution websites should not expect to find the same types of information available. If researchers do find the same types of information on different websites, it is likely to appear differently, or be called something else, preventing a researcher from searching for the desired information with a consistent term. The interviews, when compared with the results of the website analysis show what criteria are high priority, which are low priority, and the obstacles and goals of these university

websites. Through interviews a better understanding of the inconsistencies across universities is achieved.

Themes

One theme that arose from the interview data, which was supported by the website analysis, was the prioritization of providing certain information. This prioritization is important when deciding what content to make available. As in Perez's study, I also found that contact information was an important category of information to provide online (Perez, 2010). Interviewees consistently noted that contact information, specifically in the form of email addresses, phone numbers and hours of operation, were important criteria to provide on websites. The importance of contact information is supported by the high participation rates found in the General Contact Information category of the website analysis.

Additionally, the interviewees noted that finding aids and collection information were important criteria for their websites. Two of the interviewees noted redesigns, and user experience enhancements were planned for their university's finding aids. The website analysis supports the importance of providing finding aids, as each of the websites surveyed provided finding aids.

Digital collections also emerged as a point of value and prioritization. Interviewees expressed intentions to update digital collections with better identification, and better user experience. The website analysis also supports digital collections as an important element, as each of the universities provided digital collections for their audiences.

Promoting social media accounts through websites, however, seemed to have low priority based on the data gathered in this study. While three of the interviewees participated in social media outreach, all of the participants recognized the considerable time and resources needed to manage these accounts. The website analysis also reflected social media as a lower priority information category, with only nine university archives and special collections libraries participating in any social media.

The interviewees noted several obstacles in making content available through their websites. Participants frequently mentioned copyright as an issue to consider when posting material online. These issues require significant attention as copyright issues can have possible legal and ethical ramifications. Participants also mentioned that they had to rely on IT support to enact changes to their websites, which was a significant obstacle. Limited time and limited staff were noted as additional issues that hampered archivists in managing websites.

Despite the obstacles in place, the archivists interviewed consistently set goals for their websites. Throughout the interview, when an archivist would express dissatisfaction with an aspect of their website, they followed up with ways to solve problems and enhance user experience. Though the ways in which to amend their websites differed from university to university, interviewees persistently brought up ways to improve their websites.

Limitations

While this study was designed to capture a well-rounded perspective it still faced several limitations. Since this research employed two methods of research, in website analysis and interviews, the imposed timeframe limited the number of interviews, the

addition of which would have provided a more comprehensive view. Non-response errors were also encountered during the recruitment phase of this study. Each of the sixteen universities within the scope was contacted, and due to low response rate, four interviews were completed for this study.

As noted, this study was focused on the specific area of North Carolina public universities in an attempt gain a specific look at the issues faced by university archives and special collections within the state. Since this study involves a small sample and is focused on a specific geographic area, it is not necessarily generalizable to a greater university archives community.

Future Research

Additional research in the area of archives and special collections libraries, within university settings, could greatly benefit the archivists prioritizing online content at these institutions. While these websites are likely to change over time, further research could be performed on these updated websites to determine how priorities for website content changes over time.

To gain a better perspective of the usability of these archival websites, future researchers could perform usability tests with active archival website users. Further research could evaluate the websites on their design, with participants performing think-a-loud exercises to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with website designs. Using that data, as well as data from this study, researchers could suggest updates and changes that enhance user experience, while working within obstacles and limits commonly felt by university archives and special collections.

Another area for future researchers to consider is accessibility for users with disabilities. Davis's website accessibility study of the PACSCL area, showed that many archival websites are not ADA compliant, preventing those users and researchers from effectively accessing their needed information (Davis, 2012). Further research in this area could help highlight the importance of these compliance considerations as websites change designs.

Conclusion

This study set out to find if information was consistently made available through special collections and university archive websites, and found the results to vary from university to university. However, the focus on content currently made available through these websites only provides a partial story. Additional context was gained through interviewing archivists on their website content, the obstacles they face, as well as gauging their attitudes towards their sites. The resulting data showed general themes of prioritizing the types of content made available through their sites, which is reflected in the Prioritization Information Model.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

General Website Information

- Who would you identify as the Special Collections and University Archives audience? (Students, researchers, local communities)
- What services and/or information do you believe should be available through university archives websites, for your audience?
- Does your department follow any policy to decide what information to present online?
- Who would you say primarily posts the information that is available through the Special Collections and University Archives websites?

General Contact Information

- What general contact information do you believe should be made available to the public through the Special Collections website? (General contact information being hours of operation, phone numbers, directions, addresses, etc..)
- Do you believe that your universities' website fully reflects the most comprehensive general contact information to its audience? If not, what information should be added?

Outreach Social Networking

- Could you tell me what social media the Special Collections department uses to engage with their audience?
- Are there any social media accounts that the Special Collections department does not participate in, that you think would benefit the online outreach effort? (If so, which accounts and what about them is valuable?)
- Is there anything in particular that keeps the Special Collections department from participating in certain social media accounts?

Collection Information

- Are you satisfied with the current online Finding Aids that are made available through your universities' Special Collection and University Archives website? (If not, what would you like to see changed?)

Digital Collections

- Are you satisfied with the current online Digital Collections that are made available through your universities' Special Collection and University Archives website? (If not, what would you like to see changed?)

Educational/Instructional Materials

- What educational or instructional services does the Special Collections websites provide to the audience?
- Are there any educational or instructional services that you would like to make available to your audience, that are not currently available? (If so what are they?)
- Is there anything in particular that keeps the Special Collections from providing the aforementioned educational or instructional services?

Records Management

- Do you believe that your website fully explains the records management policy to its audience? (Why or why not?)
- Is there anything you would like to change about the Records Management information shared through the website? (If so what?)
- Does the Special Collections department follow any retention policies in addition to the University General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule? (Why or why not?)

Website Design

- When building or redesigning the website, is user testing available to you? Do you potentially know why or why not?
- Was any usability testing done before posting this website?
- Was the website created in house or was it created through a third party vendor?
- Are you currently satisfied with your website's design, and how it provides information to the audience, or do you believe that it would better serve your audience if it were designed differently?

Conclusion Questions

- Are there any topics, not currently addressed on the website, that you believe could be helpful to the Special Collection and University Archives audience? (Ex. Hours of operation, records management etc..)
- Are there any areas of the universities' Special Collection and University Archives websites that I haven't touched on, that you feel need additional information?
- What are the obstacles or factors, if any, that you face as a University Archivist or Special Collections Librarian in publishing information online?

- Are there any additional reasons to consider publishing information online that have not previously been covered?

Appendix B

University Archive Websites Reviewed

University	Website
Appalachian State University	http://collections.library.appstate.edu/archives
East Carolina University	http://www.ecu.edu/cs-lib/archives/
Elizabeth City State University	http://www.ecsu.edu/academics/library/archives/index.html
Fayetteville State University	http://library.uncfsu.edu/archives
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	http://library.uncfsu.edu/archives
North Carolina Central University	http://web.nccu.edu/shepardlibrary/about/dept_archives.html
North Carolina State University	http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/scrc/university-archives
University of North Carolina at Asheville	http://toto.lib.unca.edu/
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	http://library.unc.edu/wilson/uarms/
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	https://specialcollections.uncc.edu/
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	http://library.uncg.edu/info/depts/scua/collections/university_archives/index.aspx
University of North Carolina at	http://www.uncp.edu/academics/library/departments/special-collections

Pembroke	
University of North Carolina School of the Arts	http://www.uncsa.edu/archives/index.aspx
University of North Carolina at Wilmington	http://library.uncw.edu/archives_special/home
Western Carolina University	http://www.wcu.edu/hunter-library/find/special-and-digital-collections.aspx
Winston-Salem University	https://www.wssu.edu/academics/cg-okelly-library/library-services/university-archives-digital-collections.html