

So...

YOU WANT TO
DONATE YOUR STUFF
TO THE ARCHIVES?

...you

Thank you!

First of all, we want to thank you for thinking about donating your materials to the archives. We know how important your stuff is, and what a big deal it is to consider letting it go – even if you know that an archival institution will take good care of it.

We've created a donor workbook to help you understand the steps involved in the process of donating your materials so that you can feel prepared to approach the archives when you're ready to let your stuff go.

ABOUT THE DONOR WORKBOOK

The workbook is a tool that you can use to keep a record of what you are thinking as you go through the "So... you want to donate your stuff to the archives?" website. You can complete as much or as little of the workbook as you like.

The workbook is meant to help you consider in advance questions that an archivist might ask you about your materials, so that you've had a chance to think about them before you answer since donating materials can sometimes be an emotional process. The workbook also offers you an opportunity to note questions that you want to ask the archivist.

You can print the workbook out and fill in the parts you want to complete by hand, or you can type directly into the workbook.

WHAT KINDS OF STUFF DO THE ARCHIVES TAKE?

If you've read through the section on what kinds of stuff an archive might take, you may want to take a moment to write down some of the records that you create or receive that you put aside to keep for the long-term:

At the same time, there may be some materials that you've thought of donating to the archives that you now know is perhaps not the kind of thing that they take. You might want to make a note of what to remove from your materials – although you can always ask the archivist if you aren't sure what to hang on to:

The section also talked about mandates that archives have, and acquisition policies that help archivists decide what kinds of materials they can accept. Are there any questions that you have for your local archives about its mandate or acquisition policy?

HOW DO YOU PREPARE YOUR STUFF FOR THE ARCHIVES?

What would you consider the “original order” of the materials you want to donate? Recall that original order is the last order in which records were used by their creator (which might be you, a family member or a friend, etc.):

Are there any materials that you would prefer that the archives not make available to the public right away because they are private? Are there materials that might concern the privacy of another person? How long should the archives restrict access to the materials?

Are there any materials that are sensitive or controversial? Is it possible that someone might be upset by them? This does not mean that you should not donate them to the archives, but it's a good idea to make the archivist aware of them when they are processing your materials:

Do you own the copyright in all of the materials that you wish to donate, or have permission from the copyright owner? Are you willing to give permission to have the materials digitized (have an electronic copy made of them)? Can the digitized copies be made available online?

WHAT DOES THE ARCHIVES DO WITH YOUR STUFF?

Is there any information you can provide to the archivist to help them arrange your materials? For example, information about how you or the person that the materials belonged to used them? Or information about what steps you have taken to arrange your materials before donating them to the archives? You don't have to do this, but the archivist may ask if you have:

Is there any information you can provide to the archivist to help them describe your materials? For example, biographical information about yourself or the person or organization that the materials originally belonged to? Or information about the materials you are donating?

Do you have any questions for the archivist about what happens to your materials at the archives? For example, about appraisal decisions that they make to determine whether they will take materials and what materials they will keep? About what research the archivist does to arrange and describe materials? About what facilities the archives has available for long-term preservation? About how the archives provides access to the public?

WHO DONATES STUFF TO THE ARCHIVES?

Archives receive materials from private individuals, but also from groups like cultural organizations, First Nations Bands, associations, clubs and corporations. Take a moment to consider the different activities you are involved in within your local and larger communities:

If you think that one of the groups that you belong to should be represented in the archives, what kind of a case would you make to encourage the group to donate its materials? What materials does the group create that are kept for long term use, and might have value for future users of archives?

Are there any questions that you have for your local archives about who is included in their holdings?

WHY IS YOUR STUFF IMPORTANT TO THE ARCHIVES?

Who do you think might benefit from your materials? Are there uses of your materials that you might not have initially considered?

If someone asked you why you are donating your materials to the archives, what reasons would you give them? Why do you think it is important to donate your materials to the archives?

What purpose(s) do you think that archives serve? Are they meant to keep people in power accountable for their actions? Do they help to shape our collective identity? Do they act as the memory of the communities they are located in?

DONOR ACTION PLAN

You can use the space below to consolidate your thinking from the previous pages of the workbook in a document that you can take with you on your visit to the archives: what steps do you plan to take with your materials? What questions do you have for the archivist? What information will you provide the archivist with to help them prepare your materials?

Before your visit to the archives:

During your visit to the archives:

However, your trip to the archives isn't the end of your relationship with them - it's the beginning! If there's something you forgot to mention, you can always let the archivist know later. And now that you know more about the process of donating materials to an archive, we hope that you'll be inspired to see more of what your local archives has to offer...