Assessments Module: Overview & Implementation

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Collection Assessment and ArchivesSpace

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What is Collection Assessment

The systematic, purposeful gathering of information about archival collections

Archives and Special Collections knowledge about holdings tend be very impressionistic and anecdotal – assessment is a move away from that.

Why Assessment

- Expose Hidden Collections

- Establish Priorities
  - Processing/Description
  - Digitization
  - Preservation/Conservation

- Overall more access, better collection management

Goals of Assessment

- Gain additional information on the content and condition of individual collections.

- Collect information that can be used for both collection management and intellectual access purposes.

- Use collection and assessment data to inform the development of institutional and consortial priorities and funding proposals.

- Help staff to think holistically.

The survey method

- **Steps in an Assessment Survey**

  - ○ Prepare: determine scope, method, and data collection system.

  - ○ Survey all collections and create assessment and descriptive data.

  - ○ **Use descriptive data to make baseline level records available for all collections.**

  - ○ Analyze assessment data and plan future projects.

Good candidates for surveying

- Completely unprocessed collections in just about any physical format, as long as they are managed archivally.

- Accruals to processed collections.

- Collections that are partially processed or done to an earlier standard that you no longer consider adequate ("underprocessed").

- Collections that are partially described or done to an earlier standard that you no longer consider adequate ("underdescribed").

All of the holdings in a repository

Pre-ArchivesSpace Assessment Tools

o Consortial Tools: PACSCL Database
o Local Databases/Spreadsheets
o Archivists' Toolkit Assessment Module

Why ArchivesSpace

- Moving towards system integration; away from standalone databases

- ArchivesSpace is the home of all of our canonical descriptive and collection management data

- Allows us to bundle and repurpose assessment/collection management and descriptive data

Why ArchivesSpace

- Community Standards
  - Built on archival descriptive standards

  - De facto standard for assessment ratings in HSP/PACSCL model

  - Spec for assessment module developed by archival community circa 2013/2014
    - Contributions from Smithsonian, Harvard, NYU, University of Michigan and others

Why ArchivesSpace

- Ability to use our resources in ways that benefit the archival community beyond our own institution

- Assessment is a part of ethical, sustainable, and extensible processing programs

- ArchivesSpace is a way to make that work easier

THREE STREAMS OF ASSESSMENT DATA

Legacy Collection Assessments

- Block of text
- Created in local collections db
- Now in AS Collections Management subrecord

Move Survey

- Spreadsheet
- Preservation issues flagged in dedicated columns
- Data is about containers

New Assessments

- Access to Collections project
- Accessioning-as-processing
- Ongoing iterative processing

LEGACY COLLECTION ASSESSMENTS

Collection Management

Processing Priority: Low

Processing Plan	Collection has some organizational structure. Recommendations for processing: Low priority. Try again for some more stuff. Open as is. There's only a dozen or so items in the collection. If this is all there is, clean it up, although it's not worth much time. Preservation needs: refoldering, metal fasteners, staples, rubberbands, etc., newspaper clippings, photographs, photo albums, scrapbooks. Finding aid priority: Low. Preservation priority: Low. Research value: Low. Potential research interest: as is, very little; what there is has little depth. Past research interest: never heard of her before now!
Rights determined?	False
Processing Priority	Low

ASSESSMENT IS A TOOL, NOT A SOLUTION

- Assessing and prioritizing your collections will not eliminate your backlog

- Creating and migrating assessment data is work

- Assessment data needs to serve a purpose

PURPOSES FOR ASSESSMENT IN SMITH SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

- Track and report on progress

- Identify specific collection needs in an actionable way

- Identify systemic needs so they can be addressed systematically

PRINCIPLES FOR ASSESSMENT
IN SMITH COLLEGE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

- The most valuable data will be systematic

- Assessment will be integrated with other activities

- Assessment are iterative

STEP 2: REMOVE FIELDS WE DON'T WANT USED

List of Material Types / Formats

Architectural Materials	☐	Glass	☐
Art Originals	☐	Photographs	☐
Artifacts	☐	Scrapbooks	☐
Audio Materials	☐	Technical Drawings & Schematics	☐
Biological Specimens	☐		
Botanical Specimens	☐	Textiles	☐
Computer Storage Units	☐	Vellum & Parchment	☐
Film (negative, slide, or motion picture)	☐	Video Materials	☐
		Other	☐

Special Format Note

STEP 3: DOCUMENTATION & TRAINING

This repository | Search | Pull requests | Issues | Marketplace | Explore
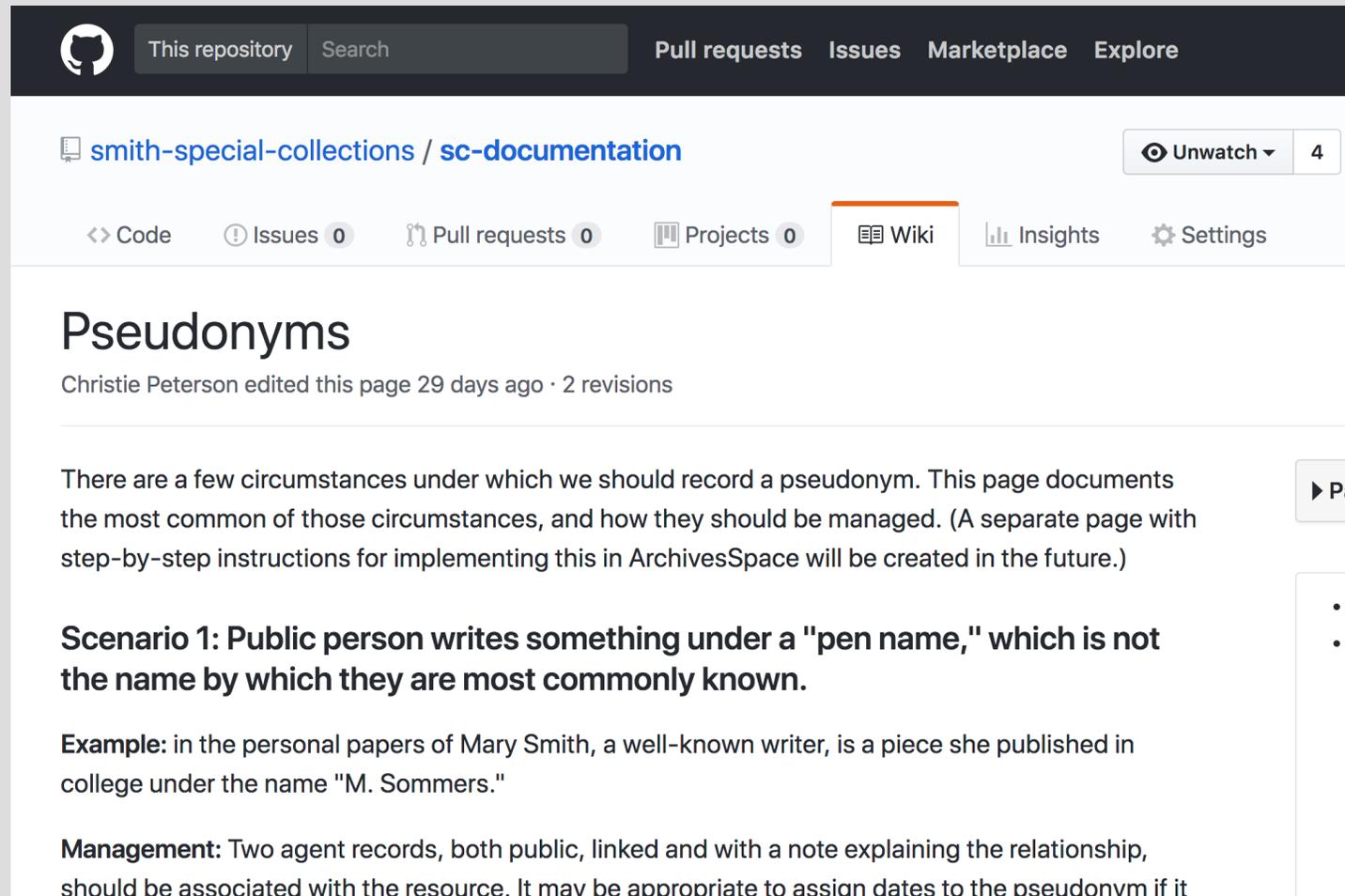
smith-special-collections / sc-documentation

Unwatch | 4

<> Code | Issues 0 | Pull requests 0 | Projects 0 | Wiki | Insights | Settings

Pseudonyms

Christie Peterson edited this page 29 days ago · 2 revisions

There are a few circumstances under which we should record a pseudonym. This page documents the most common of those circumstances, and how they should be managed. (A separate page with step-by-step instructions for implementing this in ArchivesSpace will be created in the future.)

Scenario 1: Public person writes something under a "pen name," which is not the name by which they are most commonly known.

Example: in the personal papers of Mary Smith, a well-known writer, is a piece she published in college under the name "M. Sommers."

Management: Two agent records, both public, linked and with a note explaining the relationship, should be associated with the resource. It may be appropriate to assign dates to the pseudonym if it

Questions?

Thank you for joining us today!