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Archiving: Ethical Aspects

1. Archiving Social and Behavioral Research By-products

Archiving refers to the process of appraising, cataloging, organizing, and preserving documentary material—of any type and in any medium—for open use by specific (e.g., scholarly) or general audiences.

The social and behavioral sciences produce intellectual by-products at various stages of the research process that, if preserved and organized, could further basic and applied research, aid policy making, and facilitate the development and replication of effective social intervention programs. A variety of institutions preserve such materials. They include government archives, academic data archives and libraries, and specialized organizations in both the public and private sectors. Professional organizations of social science archivists and librarians have been formed to further the field.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the US federal agency that preserves and ensures access to those official records which have been determined by the Archivist of the United States to have sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continued preservation by the Federal Government, and which have been accepted by the Archivist for deposit in his custody (44 U.S.C. 2901). Information about NARA's electronic records holdings (most of which are data files) can be obtained from the Internet site <http://www.nara.gov/nara/electronic>.

The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) is the largest academic-based social science data archive. Founded in 1962 at the University of Michigan, ICPSR is a membership-based organization which provides access to a large archive of computer-based research and instructional data in political science, sociology, demography, economics, history, education, gerontology, and criminal justice. More information about ICPSR and its holdings is available from <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>.

Sociometrics Corporation was established in 1983. The company's primary mission is the development and dissemination of social science research-based resources for a variety of audiences, including researchers, students, policymakers, practitioners, and community-based organizations. Sociometrics has pioneered in the establishment and operation of topically-focused data, instrument, publication, and (since the mid-1990s) program archives (<http://www.socio.com>): (a) *Data Archives*: collections of original machine-readable data from over 300 exemplary studies, many of them longitudinal, on the American family, teen sexuality and pregnancy, social gerontology, disability, AIDS and STDs, maternal drug abuse, and geographic indicators; (b) *Instrument Archives*: the questionnaires, interview protocols, and other research instruments that were used to collect the data in the data archives; (c) *Bibliographic Archives*: collections of abstracts of research papers, books, and other publications dealing with topics covered by the data archives; and (d) *Program Archives*: collections of program and evaluation materials from several dozen intervention programs that have proven effective in preventing risky behaviors such as unprotected sex and drug use. These topically-focused archives synthesize research in the field in one

place; facilitate further research with the best existing data and accompanying instruments; promote data-based policymaking; and help service providers and practitioners use the insights gained from research.

Two professional organizations of social science data archivists and librarians are the Association of Population Libraries and Information Centers (APLIC) and the International Association for Social Science Information Service & Technology (IASSIST). APLIC's membership, consisting of both individuals and organizations, represents some of the oldest population and family planning agencies and institutions in the US. IASSIST is an international organization dedicated to the issues and concerns of social science data librarians, data archivists, data producers, and data users. This unique professional association assists members in their support of social science research. The APLIC and IASSIST membership lists provide pointers to the various social science data collections housed all over the world. (<http://www.med.jhu.edu/ccp/aplic/APLIC.html>; <http://datalib.library.ualberta.ca/iassist/index.html>).

2. Ethical Aspects in Archiving

The development of collections such as those contained in the above archives involves a series of decisions with ethical considerations and implications.

2.1 Protecting the Integrity of the Selection Process

Given the limited nature of resources allocable to archiving, how should the contents of the collection be selected? Some archives sidestep this challenge by merely cataloging and warehousing archival material (e.g., data sets) donated to them by the field. While this procedure undoubtedly results in the lowest per-capita archiving cost, the quality of the resultant archival collection is uncertain at best. A better procedure is to set objective technical and substantive standards for inclusion in the archival collection and then actively recruit material meeting or surpassing such standards. The previously described data and program archives at Sociometrics have worked with Scientist Expert Panels in establishing criteria for inclusion in the various collections. For the data archives the selection criteria are scientific merit, substantive utility, and program and policy relevance of the data sets comprising the collection. For the program archives the selection criterion is documented effectiveness in preventing the social problem or disease (e.g., drug use, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, HIV/AIDS) or in changing these problems' risky-behavior antecedents (e.g., delaying age at first intercourse, increasing the use of contraception and/or an STD-prophylactic at first and every act of sexual intercourse, abstaining from or reducing the frequency of

drug use). Having established these objective inclusion criteria, archive staff then work with their respective Scientist Expert Panels to identify and prioritize available data sets and intervention programs for inclusion in the collections. The end result is an archival collection with integrity and credibility.

2.2 Protecting Respondents' Confidentiality

Data archives often contain responses to sensitive questions, some of which, for example, ask respondents to admit to illegal, immoral, or 'private' behavior such as abortion, premarital or extramarital sexual activity, mental illness, alcohol abuse, and drug use. How can researchers' need to know (the incidence, prevalence, antecedents, and consequences of these social problems) be balanced against respondents' rights to privacy? This ethical consideration is most often addressed by stripping all archival material of information that could be used to identify individual subjects, for example, name, address, social security number, exact date of birth (often only month and year of birth are included in a public use database). A problem arises when data holders want to strip the data set of key variables such as those measuring the sensitive behaviors listed above, prior to placing a data set in a public use archive. This desire is motivated by the fear that such information could be linked to particular respondents by malicious, hardworking sleuths, even without the help of individual identifiers such as name, address, and so forth. Such censorship restricts the range of uses to which the data set can be put by future researchers, and archives typically make an active attempt to find alternate solutions. For example, users could be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to being allowed access to the data, pledging to use the data for legitimate research purposes only.

2.3 Censoring Potentially Controversial or Offensive Material in the Collection

Intervention program archives occasionally encounter an analogous censorship-related challenge. For example, several of the effective programs selected for archiving by the Scientist Expert Panel for the Program Archive on Sexuality, Health and Adolescence (PASHA) contain sexually explicit material that could be viewed as offensive and inappropriate by some individuals and communities. However, because these prevention programs are targeted at high-risk, already sexually active youth, the material could also be seen as appropriate, even necessary, to drive home relevant points. In addition, these programs, like other PASHA programs, meet the collection's inclusion criterion of demonstrated effectiveness in changing sexual risk-related behavior in at least one subgroup of teens. The

decision was made to include the material without alteration or censorship, but to publicize and disseminate the collection as an eclectic one, with different schools and communities encouraged to replicate those programs consistent with their own values, norms, and target populations. A complimentary program abstract was developed so that both the approach and the content of the program packages could be perused prior to requesting the program from the archive.

2.4 Timing of Release of Information to an Archive

Holders of data sets and developers of effective programs often, and understandably, want to reap some payoff from their professional investments by keeping the data or programs to themselves until they have published what they wish from the data (or tweaked the intervention program to their satisfaction). The ethical issue arises when this 'private' or 'proprietary' period of time stretches to what the field would view as abnormally long. This is especially true when the data were collected, or the intervention program developed, with government funds. Several US federal agencies are trying to forestall the problem by building resource-sharing ground rules into the original funding award document. Thus, the grant or contract may specify that the data to be generated from a research study will be placed in a public archive two years after the expiration of the project. This solution gives the original developer the fair 'head start' their efforts have earned, while ensuring that the data collected with government funds will be shared with the field before it gets stale.

2.5 Assignment of Due Credit to Both Original Producer and Archivist

Data sets and program materials typically are received by an archive in a format that data developers and their colleagues found workable, but one not yet suitable for public use. The archivist contributes significant additional value in preparing the database for public use. For example, with the approval of the data donor, inconsistencies in the database are eliminated, or at least documented. The documentation is augmented, both at the study level (describing study goals, sampling and data collection procedures) and at the variable level (assigning names and labels for each variable; documenting algorithms for constructed scale variables). Occasionally, the variable and scale documentation is done using the syntax of a popular statistical analysis package such as SPSS or SAS, facilitating future data analysis. Archivists who prepare intervention program packages for public use make analogous contributions. Program materials are edited and 'prettified' for public use. User's Guides

and Facilitator's Manuals are created so that the package is replication-ready in the absence of the original developer. In short, the archiving process is best viewed and executed as collaboration between original developer and archivist. Care must be taken to give due credit for the final product to both individuals, teams, and institutions.

2.6 Tension between Fidelity and Usability in the Archiving Process

The collaborative model is productive not only for assignment of due credit but also for joint resolution of the fidelity vs. usability issues that occasionally arise during the archiving process. Should obvious errors in the data-base be corrected or only documented? Should original program materials that were found effective in the developmental site be altered when replication sites find them unclear or when the curriculum they present is based on out of date data? Issues such as these are best resolved on a case-by-case basis by the archivist and original developer working side by side in collaborative fashion.

2.7 Ownership of the Research and Development By-products

The purposes and procedures of the archive accepting the donation should be made clear to the donor at the outset. It should be communicated to data donors that the research by-product they are donating is being put in a public archive whose main goal is the preservation of the resource. Some archives also actively publicize and disseminate their holdings. In addition, as seen above, archives vary in the extent to which they work with the donor in 'upgrading' the material for public use. The donor should be informed in advance of what to expect along these lines. Issues of credit and ownership should also be agreed to before archiving work begins. How will professional credit for the collaborative product be allocated? Will the resultant product be sold to the end user (at cost or for profit) or given away? If the product will be sold for profit, will royalties be given to the original developer? If the product will be sold at cost, will free or discounted copies be made available to the original developer?

3. Conclusion

Social science research yields many by-products that, if properly archived, could be used to further future research, aid policymaking, and foster the development and replication of effective prevention and treatment programs. Several challenges, some with ethical implications, arise in the archiving process. All

are resolvable with good will and commitment to the public good on the part of both original developers and archivists.

See also: Archival Methods; Archives and Historical Databases; Confidentiality and Statistical Disclosure Limitation; Data Archives: International; Databases, Core: Sociology; Deceptive Methods: Ethical Aspects; Ethics Committees in Science: European Perspectives; Privacy: Legal Aspects; Privacy of Individuals in Social Research: Confidentiality; Research Subjects, Informed and Implied Consent of

J. J. Card

Arctic: Sociocultural Aspects

Western curiosity about the peoples of the North can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. Still, the anthropological study of the Arctic as an area of shared cultural traits and environmental conditions hardly predates the year 1900. The early twentieth century paradigms of diffusionism and environmental determinism were instrumental in creating the simplistic notion of a unified Arctic or circumpolar culture (e.g., Bogoras 1929, Hatt 1914). Detailed ethnographic research conducted since that time has demonstrated that variation is an intrinsic characteristic of Arctic sociocultural systems (some of this research is summarized in Berg 1973, Graburn and Strong 1973, Irimoto and Yamada 1994). Nevertheless, this article approaches the subject by focusing on sociocultural similarities, without denying the existence of considerable differences.

1. *The Arctic and Its Indigenous Inhabitants*

Culturally, the Arctic can be subdivided into a North American and a northern Eurasian part. The North American Arctic is primarily inhabited by speakers of Eskimo-Aleut languages. The old collective ethnonym Eskimo is little used today, and commonly replaced by Inuit and Yupik. Aleut, Yupik, and Inuit societies inhabit the coastal areas of northern North America, stretching from southern Alaska to eastern Greenland. Here the geographical boundary between Arctic and Subarctic coincides more or less with the cultural boundary between Inuit/Yupik/Aleut and Athapaskan and Algonquian groups of North American Indians (see *North America and Native Americans: Sociocultural Aspects*).

In the northern part of Eurasia, the physical boundary between Arctic and Subarctic does not

coincide as neatly with cultural boundaries. In Siberia, the cultural realm of the Arctic extends into the Subarctic ecological zone, and reaches its limits only in the steppes of southern Siberia. Samoyedic Tungusic, and Paleoasiatic languages are spoken by the culturally 'most typical' Siberians. Speakers of Turkic languages inhabit large parts of the eastern Siberian tundra and boreal forest, but their historical and cultural background points to Central Asia. In northern Europe, where the vegetational and climatic zone of the Arctic is narrow, conventionally only the Saami (speakers of Finno-Ugric languages) are considered an indigenous Arctic people. Other peoples who also inhabit the northern margins of Europe but are organized into large-scale agricultural societies, are not considered in this overview (see *Europe: Sociocultural Aspects*).

2. *Indigenous and Colonial Histories*

Human habitation of the circumpolar North extends over several thousand years. The direct presence of European colonial powers in the Arctic is a relatively recent phenomenon, but findings of iron and other items that were not produced locally attest to long-standing connections with trade centers to the South. The territory of the Saami has a history of almost 2,000 years of outside intervention, as Vikings pushed north along the western coast of contemporary Norway to extract natural resources and to acquire items of Saami production through trade and tribute. Similarly, European expansion into other parts of the North was fueled by the quest for marketable resources. From the seventeenth century onwards, the rich boreal forests of Siberia and Canada became staging areas for the fur trade. The areas north of the tree line were little affected by fur trapping prior to the twentieth century, but the coastal areas of the Arctic close to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans became important destinations for the Euro-American whaling industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The early days of colonial rule had little direct administrative impact in many areas of the North. Often it amounted to little more than the purely nominal claim to 'owning' the land, and to sporadic resource extraction. In certain areas, however, the state took a more active role in regulating the lives of the indigenous population: For example, in Greenland a particular form of 'enlightened paternalism' was the guiding principle of Danish rule from the eighteenth century onwards. The second half of the nineteenth century was in this respect far more disruptive than earlier periods: The newly emerging ideology of nationalism brought indigenous peoples from northern Scandinavia to Alaska under increasing pressure to adopt the language and culture of the respective dominant societies.