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COVID-19 dramatically changed American work environments, including positions in academic archives. This research explores the impact of COVID-19 on small academic archives and the effectiveness of disaster management plans and scholarship in mitigating damages and fallout. Thus, the research questions are as follows: What disaster management strategies have small academic archives employed in response to COVID-19, and what implications do these responses have for future archival disaster management strategies? This study employs a qualitative thematic analysis of interview responses from liberal arts college archivists and special collections librarians selected from the Oberlin Group of Libraries on their COVID-19 responses. Data gathered from surveys and interviews were analyzed and compiled to evaluate key themes. This research may serve as a starting point for a fuller exploration of disaster management strategies in the wake of COVID-19, not only at archival collections of small liberal arts colleges, but also at similarly sized cultural heritage institutions.

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COVID-19 CONTINGENCIES: DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN SMALL ACADEMIC
ARCHIVES

by
Jacob W. MacDonnell

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Approved by

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Helen Tibbo

Table of Contents

Introduction

The novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, likely needs no extended introduction. The highly infectious disease emerged in late 2019 in Wuhan, China and quickly spread around the world, creating a global pandemic as defined by the World Health Organization.[1] With regulated access to vaccines at the time of writing, as well as bottlenecked hospitals across the country, COVID-19 created limited in-person working conditions. These changes resulted in sweeping financial effects to the United States' economy, as evidenced by the passing of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES act) in March of 2020.[2] The Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization have outlined the importance of self-quarantine, preserving social distancing, and, in the case of exposure, self-isolation for periods of two weeks.[3] At the time of writing this paper, multiple vaccines have been released for public use in the United State, although their accessibility is limited.[4] Granular changes to daily working life resultant from COVID-19 reverberate around almost every conceivable American profession, not excluding archives and records management. This essay explores the impact of COVID-19 on small academic archives at liberal arts college in the Oberlin Group of Libraries and the effectiveness of business continuity planning and disaster management in mitigating those effects.

Across the country, archives connected to academic institutions have lessened physical access to their collections due to the virus, and, in many cases, they have been forced to work remotely, likely hindering their ability to effectively appraise, accession, process, and digitize many paper records.[5] Additionally, with the added burden of staffers occasionally having limited access to computers, relevant digital resources, or an IT

department at their disposal, digital archives and electronic collections also face accessibility issues while employees adapt to remote work. Academic archives across the country must respond to these challenges, somehow remaining productive and accessible while their staff members are forced to work from home and under duress due to COVID-19.

In particular, smaller academic archives with fewer employees and restricted financial resources face immediate challenges in enabling and promoting productive labor during this period of remote work. In the wake of COVID-19, academic institutions face financial burdens resultant from uncertainty surrounding enrollment numbers and on-campus residency.[6] Therefore, many small archives connected to colleges and universities have scarce resources for new computers, electronic tools, hiring new workers, and funding new acquisitions. Furthermore, academic archives that have not fully developed refined, online-accessible, and searchable digital archives are in jeopardy of being left completely unused while public health officials work out the logistics of increasing vaccine availability. With limited resources and staff in comparison to many governmental, corporate, or large-scale research archives, archival repositories tied to liberal arts colleges and other small universities may face decreased productivity while COVID-19 limits in-person work. Additionally, a stifling lack of funding in the wake of an economic downturn demands creative and fiscally responsible plans-of-action.[7] In times like these, archivists need to be on the defensive, planning for any further limitations and complications related to external environmental factors linked to COVID-19.

This master's paper attempts to answer the following research questions: What disaster management strategies have small academic archives employed in response to COVID-19, and what implications do these responses have for future archival disaster management strategies? The typology of "academic" archives indicates that the archives in question secure the majority of their funding from a parent university or college. The adjective "smaller," for the purposes of this paper, indicates that each of the interviewed archives has ten or fewer full-time employees working in the collection. Smaller does not necessarily indicate a smaller number of records holdings, but rather limited financial resources for staffing and hiring full-time workers. Examining archives with thinner resources and staff availability could help a broad swath of academic archives and local historical societies prepare for similar disaster scenarios in the future.

In an effort to understand the current successes and failures of small academic archives' work-from-home efforts, I propose three evaluative sub-questions. First, how are some specific small academic archives actually handling this challenge? Through interviews of seventeen Oberlin Group of Libraries college archivists, this study aims to elucidate what work processes occurred at these academic archives since the colleges moved to remote work. Second, what roles do disaster management scholarship and recent presentations, webinars, and help pages from professional organizations concerning COVID-19 play in aiding and abetting archives? Thirdly, where is there room for improvement? The traditional, or more current, on-the-fly scholarship may leave out important information that archival workers have discovered first hand. Workers currently experiencing the workplace effects of COVID-19 have valuable information that may help to improve current disaster preparedness standards for archives.

This paper aims to present a portrait of how a sector of American archives have handled a unique and complicated disaster scenario. By replicating, adjusting, and analyzing this study's findings, other managing archivists, staffers, and scholars can help their local archival repositories, historical societies, and cultural heritage collections navigate this difficult period and any similar future crises. The current public health catastrophe demands a freshly written set of standards for archival disaster management clearly laid out in scholarship. Observing, documenting, and sharing archives' actions during the current pandemic offers guidance for similar events in the future. COVID-19 may be the most intense viral outbreak in recent memory, but it likely won't be the last disaster to force archives to adopt remote work or deal with financial constraints for a sustained period.

Literature Review

The following literature review aims to elucidate key tropes in disaster management and business continuity planning scholarship – two related fields within library and information science that explain how collecting organizations should navigate disaster scenarios, or events that limit normal work functionality. According to Virginia and Michael Cerullo's article "Business Continuity Planning: A Comprehensive Approach" (p. 2004), business continuity plans usually contain disaster management or recovery plans as subsections (71). That being said, disaster management is a topic of study in its own right, with a number of variant strategies and methodologies used by businesses, not-for-profits, governmental agencies, and organizations at large. In his book *Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives* (p. 2003), Graham Matthews defines disaster management as "planning and being prepared for the unexpected in libraries and archives, and dealing with disasters effectively should they occur" (3). While disaster management encompasses a broad array of techniques for assessing and confronting damages, business continuity plans offer a more guided approach to contingency planning. Business continuity plans typically have three stages: a disaster management plan, a business impact and risk analysis, and a program for training staff on disaster preparedness.

In the following literature review, I first explore the concepts of disaster management and contingency planning and their connection to the LIS field of study,

largely through analysis of Graham Matthews' scholarship on the subject. Subsequently, I describe the important elements of and concepts related to business continuity planning scholarship and its three stages. Finally, I observe how professional organizations share findings in the midst of a current catastrophe in order to disseminate crucial disaster management information to libraries and archives in a timely manner. I place the particular challenges linked to COVID-19, such as working-from-home and running virtual teams, in conversation with my analysis and synthesis of relevant scholarly literature referenced in the review.

1. **Disaster Management & COVID-19**

Contingency planning for disaster situations that effect archival institutions has rightfully been a subject of scholarship for decades. Graham Matthews observes that libraries began paying heed to disaster management scholarship as early as the 1970s (1).[8] Global occurrences of natural and man-made disasters have damaged and negatively affected libraries, archives, and cultural heritage institutions long enough to merit scholarship that explores the best methods to prepare an archive for a disaster, as well as how to lessen damages following an unpreventable one. Typically, contingency plans employed in archives, cultural heritage institutions, and libraries are called disaster management plans. In his article "Disaster management in the cultural heritage sector: a perspective of international activity from the United Kingdom: lessons and messages" (p. 2007), Matthews defines "disaster" as "any incident that threatens human safety" (2). This encompasses a broad variety of events that could negatively affect an archive – flooding, fires, natural disasters, governmental or war-related conflicts, and, certainly, global pandemics. There is a clear and immediate need for archival disaster management

planning that accounts for crises that sharply limit in-person work, such as this

global pandemic.

Researchers and scholars outside of the realm of library and information science

publications have extensively written on disaster management and contingency planning.

Libraries, archives, and cultural heritage institutions have explored these subjects as

viable tools to mitigate and prevent disaster damages. In their 2007 article "Disaster

Management in Archives, Libraries, and Museums: An International Overview," Graham

Matthews, Yvonne Smith, and Gemma Knowles suggest that archives should strategize

and create disaster management plans to best prepare themselves for unforeseen

challenges and disasters (12). Frank Cervone, author of the article "Disaster recovery and

continuity planning for digital library systems" (p. 2006), has also noted the important

role that business continuity plans can play for digital library systems. Cervone

emphasizes that these plans help to limit possible financial and legal losses, while helping

coordinate a smooth and fiscally responsible recovery (174). Disaster management

planning offers preventative measures and protective steps to limit damage in cultural

heritage collections and repositories, even if they were not initially designed with

libraries and archives in mind.

Despite the clear importance of developing and communicating plans that limit

damages resultant from disasters, the scholarly literature suggests archives, cultural

heritage institutions, and libraries rarely use contingency plans for disasters in the first

place. In his 2006 article "The Seven Deadly Sins of Disaster Recovery," Randy

Silverman notes that "only 20% of all U.S. collecting institutions have a written disaster

plan" (32). Matthews, Smith, and Knowles highlight a 2004 survey conducted for the

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), which similarly indicates that only slightly above half of the surveyed national libraries had disaster management plans (6). Possible roadblocks for the development of disaster management plans usually relate to limited time or financial resources, yet their value as preventative measures cannot be understated. In *Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives* Heather Mansell writes, "undoubtedly, planning will need a significant financial contribution; the initial outlay for materials, equipment and supplies can be substantial" (15). Furthermore, Mansell notes that plans can take between two months to a full year to develop (28). Regardless of cost, not developing and utilizing a disaster management plan exposes an organization to extreme financial risk. Disaster planning is most effective when it operates in a preventative and protective fashion, rather than a reactive one.

In addition to the strikingly low percentage of libraries and archives with disaster management plans in place in 2006, scholarship on the subject has not had time to evaluate preventative measures and methods to support remote-work. Current scholarship on archival disaster management generally does not provide disaster-specific information related to training employees for pandemic situations, managing a scattered workforce, and limiting the spread of disease. This is worth mentioning due to the commonplace nature for specific guidelines on limiting damages extant from flooding, fires, and other more commonly discussed disaster scenarios in archival disaster management scholarship.[9] Literature on the topic of disaster planning, both inside and outside the realm of information and library science publications, has yet to develop clear guidelines for how an archive should operate during a pandemic. For example, the second edition of Lawrence Webber and Michael Wallace's *The Disaster Recovery Handbook - A Step by*

Step Plan to Ensure Business Continuity and Protect Vital Operations,

Facilities, and Assets (p. 2010), does not account for viral diseases in their chapter on

types of disasters that might affect organizations. Ironically, when discussing "viruses"

Webber and Wallace clearly refer to computer malware rather than the literal spread of a

viral disease (57).

A well-thought-out disaster plan allows archivists to best mitigate the fallout of

natural and man-made disasters through a rapid, robust response. A famous aphorism

attributed to Yogi Berra says "it's tough to make predictions, especially about the

future!" Disasters often strike with little-to-no warning. Archivists must respond at short

notice to watershed cultural moments. In *Disaster Management for Libraries and*

Archives, Mansell notes that preparedness and response-time is "considered to be the

most important" element of a disaster control plan (24). Gary Frost's article "Lessons

from Katrina: Recovery of cultural collections concerning restoration and damage

mitigation work on cultural collections recovering from Hurricane Katrina" (p. 2005)

suggests that quick response time to a disaster scenario can "save collections" (37).

Similarly, Randy Silverman writes that sloth ranks amongst the titular "Seven Deadly

Sins of Disaster Recovery" that he explores in his article. Disaster management

scholarship ubiquitously emphasizes the importance of response time, no matter the

scenario.

Another vital element of a disaster management plan is the ability to prepare

employees ahead of time for new work patterns that may develop when an emergency

upends normal ways of doing business. For example, the COVID crisis prevents archives

from deploying an all hands-on deck disaster management strategy since workers cannot

congregate safely. Disaster management demands an immediate response from archivists, but COVID-19 may limit their ability to do so. In *Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives*, Graham Matthews and John Feather write, "It is vital that we constantly review and consolidate good practice, and consider new issues and how to deal with them in order to safeguard the richness of resources in libraries and archives worldwide" (xv). Matthews and Feather's guidance is perhaps easier said than done. They counsel that workers must carefully search the existing literature that defines the creation and upkeep processes of archival disaster management often without explicit connections to the type of disaster they presently face. Staff, already under pressure to finish tasks during normal times, may be challenged to find additional hours in the day to prepare for a crisis that may never emerge. Nonetheless the scholarship on disaster management suggests best practices require a work force ready to pivot and adapt to unusual circumstances brought on by an emergency.

2. The Three Stages of Business Continuity Planning

Despite gaps in disaster management scholarship in relation to COVID-19, the core tenets of business continuity planning have the makings of effective tools to combat the negative work-related effects specific to the pandemic. In *The Disaster Recovery Handbook*, Wallace and Webber state that business continuity plans are designed to "allow your business to function at possibly a reduced level during and immediately after an emergency" (xii). Virginia and Michael Cerullo explain the foundational elements of business continuity planning by highlights its three key functional aims (71):

- to identify major risks associated with a limited work force

- to develop a plan to mitigate damages in the event that risks
  become reality

- to train employees to be ready in the event of a disaster or limited work

These goals highlight the importance of planning ahead for disaster in order to bolster productivity and prepare workers for abnormal working conditions. Graham Matthews similarly lays out a multi-part plan for disaster management which maps onto Virginia and Michael Cerullo's guidelines. Matthews' plan for disaster management includes stages for risk assessment, a disaster control plan, and cooperative activity.[10] As noted in the periodical published by American Libraries magazine "Coping in the time of COVID-19," librarians such as Lisa Rosenblum, the executive director of King County public library system in Washington state, have "pulled out our business continuity plans" (22). By preparing to run an organization with limited human capital and electronic resources, business continuity plans serve as a useful tool in a period where workers cannot come to a physical work site due to the spread of an infectious disease. The already limited numbers of libraries that have developed business continuity plans shows the weakness many small academic archives currently face with COVID-19.

2.A. Stage One: The Disaster Control Plan

Scholarship suggests that a crucial step toward mitigating damages resultant from a disaster scenario is the effective communication of a business continuity plan, also called a disaster control plan, to expressly deal with fallout. Wallace and Webber emphasize the importance of determining an internal plan for disaster situations in *The Disaster Recovery Handbook*'s first chapter, noting that organizations without business continuity plans often face the most serious repercussions in the wake of a disaster (3).

Disaster management and business continuity planning scholarship emphasize

the importance of preparing a plan before symptoms of a disaster effect standard day-to-

day operations. Matthews, Smith, and Knowles suggest that preparedness is one of four

key stages of disaster management and business continuity planning – the others being

prevention, reaction, and recovery (10).

In disaster control plans, preparedness largely revolves around establishing clear

roles in the event of an emergency, as well as developing solid lines of communication

for those times of crisis. *The Disaster Recovery Handbook* and *The Field Guide to*

Emergency Response (produced by the Heritage Emergency Task Force), which details

specific response plans for archives and other cultural heritage institutions, both

emphasize the importance of all staff members possessing familiarity with the creation,

contents, and intention of a disaster control plan. Organizations can establish clear lines

of communication for a disaster control plan by considering their current internal

structure, evaluating where it succeeds and fails, and developing their plan based on those

findings. In her chapter "Disaster Control Plans," from *Disaster Management in*

Libraries and Archives (19), Mansell concludes that the size of an institution plays an

important role in determining an appropriate number of workers to compose an

emergency response team and their objectives. Documentation should be standardized

and readily available to employees, both online and in-person if possible.[11] Employing

existing communication routes that staff members are comfortable using ensures a level

of familiarity during a period of uncertainty and chaos.

Consider the importance and complicated nature of clearly communicating plans

of action during COVID-19. Information on the disease constantly changes. Frequent

government declarations change legal working conditions. Staff may have

limited access to computers, and workers are decentralized and unable to communicate in

person. Existing challenges related to librarianship and telecommuting have been

documented in Zarha Tahavori's 2015 study "Teleworking in the National Library and

Archives of Iran: Teleworkers' Attitudes." Tahavori notes that teleworkers faced

challenges with feeling isolated, family interruptions during work, excessive overtime

hours, limited computer access, and a lack of proper training (344). Mansell emphasizes

the importance that managing occupational health safety and welfare plays during

disaster management, including alleviating stress and potential mental burdens (26).

During COVID-19, these challenges are likely amplified, as some archives will move

entirely to remote work, and could directly affect lines of communication and work

dynamics. For example, a lack of training might leave users unfamiliar with a technology

such as Zoom, or limited electronic resources or poor internet connectivity could

altogether deny a worker the ability to attend relevant meetings or do remote work. There

is a functional precedent for distanced-work in libraries, which may serve as a partial

solution, but requires thoughtful planning. In her article "Theological Librarianship from

a Distance," Melody Diehl Detar notes the importance of creating a written plan for any

moves toward telecommuting, as well as the clear communication of this process (12).

Detar's analysis of work-from-home in libraires reveals a possible complication, whereby

archives may need to develop guidelines for remote-work in conjunction with their

disaster control plans in order to limit COVID-related communication complications.

The prevention element of disaster control plans, as described by Matthews,

Smith and Knowles, closely relates to preparedness, as it further develops preemptive

measures for archives to avoid disaster damages. Prevention dictates that

managers and members of the disaster response team evaluate and develop actionable

items that limit preventable risks and enhance workplace safety.[12] Heather Mansell

observes that common goals in the prevention stage revolve around assessing plumbing,

HVAC, and exposure to damaging chemicals or organisms (23). Prevention not only

includes common sense workplace check-ups, but also demands regular evaluative

reflection on the archives' current disaster management plans and procedures. In COVID-

19 times, this might mean changing foot-traffic pathway planning, limiting indoor

patronage and staff, and having sanitizing stations readily available.

 Graham Matthews conceptually expands the scope of prevention to include

maintenance of digital collections in his introductory chapter to *Disaster Management in*

Libraries and Archives. Matthews writes, "An awareness seems to be growing among

librarians within the digital library environment that they need to review disaster

management procedures and practice relating to computers" (9). Digital information

systems hold increased importance during COVID-19 due to the limitation of archives

open for in-person research, and therefore should certainly be a routine part of libraries

and archives' preventative measures when developing a disaster control plan.

 The reaction and response elements of a disaster control plan respectively offer

short-term and long-term methods of limiting damages. Reaction, as described by

Matthews, Smith and Knowles, refers to the immediate response to the current situation,

which often demands a "creative" approach (10). Archives and libraries should consider

which authority figures or emergency service providers will be able to help in the event

of variant styles of emergencies.[13] For example, small academic archives now might have

contact information for state, local, and university health officials who dictate

public health policy in the event of a pandemic. Furthermore, in their response archivists

need to make decisions about collections if they are in jeopardy; as Heather Mansell

notes, records may need to go to conservators, into freezers, or to an off-site storage

location (24). Recovery comparably encourages archivists to consider where and when to

seek aid, as well as how to best record an efficacious disaster management process.

Mansell argues that part of recovery entails communicating with peer institutions, and

consulting professional organizations and government or university officials in order to

determine the best avenues forward (24). This might be an appropriate stage to move

forward with any insurance claims, or dealing with media that may attempt to conduct

news coverage of the disaster (Silverman 38).

  Ultimately, while disaster control plans can help limit losses during periods of

emergency, losses should be expected in the event of the unexpected. Disaster control

plans emphasize prevention and preparedness because when disaster strikes, its likely to

hurt collections immediately and without notice. Fire, flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes,

terrorist attacks, and viral diseases do not give archivists much time to assess their

collections and adjust without consequence. In the wake of COVID-19, archives might

not readily have access to and care for collections, and likely face key challenges.

Therefore, determining how to spend time and money protecting your collection is a

crucial element of a disaster control plan. As Heather Mansell writes, "in the event of a

disaster, staff will need to make judgments about what to save first" (26). All of these

steps in developing a disaster control plan for an archive should be underpinned by a

genuine knowledge of the collection at hand, as well as a commitment to the

organization's mission statement and core values.

2.B. Stage Two: Business Impact & Risk Analysis (BIRA)

Business continuity planning requires a high level of efficacy as an organization,

especially when it comes to human and financial capital, which both could be greatly

limited during a disaster scenario. In the times of COVID-19, small academic archives

must prepare for the possibility of workers taking sick leave and parent institutions

implementing restrictive budgeting. Understanding the scope of these challenges and

their effects helps prevent the failure of mission-critical work endeavors. Virginia and

Michael Cerullo note that a business impact and risk analysis, or a BIRA, can help

identify the core functions of an organization that financial sponsors and patrons demand

most frequently or find most valuable (71). Frank Cervone also suggests that good

business continuity plans often begin with a "business risk impact analysis" that evaluates

the most critical functions of an organization, its biggest vulnerabilities, and the risk

associated with repairing said vulnerabilities (174). Many libraries and archives have

even informally utilized elements of a BIRA in order to conduct preventative measures

for obvious damages.[14] Formally writing a BIRA helps expand the preventative measures

for limiting risks established in a disaster management plan.

Some archives and collecting institutions choose to begin the process of

developing a business continuity plan by conducting a BIRA before they develop a

disaster management plan in hopes of understanding the limitations of their potential

resources during the recovery process. As Frank Cervone writes, "the BIRA will provide

a basis for recovery plan development, management, and testing" (174). However, some

institutions favor creating disaster management plans first in order to develop

emergency regulations in the event of an unforeseen disaster (Cervone 175). Regardless

of when a BIRA is implemented, accounting for limited resources is a foundational

element of business continuity planning. Office leaders and team managers will likely

take charge of this stage of business continuity planning, and their continued effort

throughout the process enables the plan's successful creation (Silverman 33).

The confident leadership of a manager or managing team best enables disaster

preparedness, as well as an efficient disaster response. Wallace and Webber's *The

Disaster Recovery Handbook* notes that the first step, aside from securing backing to

write and enact a business continuity plan, is to "select someone to lead the project" (4).

The Field Guide to Emergency Response also suggests that appointing a "response team

leader" is a crucial step, and that the leader's most important task should be

communicating expectations and goals with the other workers who help with disaster

response and business continuity planning (11). Business continuity plans require a staff

member in a position of authority to delegate necessary tasks, especially following an

organization's BIRA. Randy Silverman suggests that a key to disaster preparedness is to

"identify and train a calm, well organized person and his or her backup to take

responsibility of the recovery process" (34). In this period of time, many organizations

use their BIRA in order to determine how to adapt an organization's most important task

to a format appropriate for the current situation and limitations. Strong leaders can help

honestly evaluate limited resources in order to determine an archives pathway forward

during a disaster. Silverman additionally notes the importance that instant and clear lines

of communication between managers and workers plays in fostering an efficient BIRA

and disaster management plan. That leader should know the scope of the

project or plan, the bounds of the institution's resources, and how to effectively

encourage and delegate tasks to coworkers. Centralized leadership acting throughout the

process of writing a business continuity plan can additionally offer time estimates for

various tasks, sequence work, and help make the project feel cohesive, says *The Field

Guide to Emergency Response* (11).

When leadership roles and clear lines of communication have been established,

staff members must consider which disasters are most likely to affect their organization,

communicate clear goals for mitigating risks, and delegate tasks in order to enact these

ideas. In her chapter on risk management from *Disaster Management for Libraries and

Archives*, Alice Cannon holds that archives should consider the interests of their primary

stakeholders, what existing workplace features limit or support risk management, the

existing risk assessment strategies in-place, how long the process will take, and methods

of evaluating their risk management efforts in the future (50-53). Seeking input from all

staff members in a BIRA helps elucidate what each worker views as their most crucial

task, while also providing a number of perspectives from inside the organization. Cannon

notes that a classic "brainstorm between colleagues" is a tried and true method of risk

assessment (55). Other methods might include on-site inspections with HVAC and

construction professionals, consultations with health officials in the case of COVID-19,

and surveying patrons and stakeholders (Cannon 55).

Once the archive has identified relevant risks, leaders need to make express

decisions about limited library functionality and resource allocation in written form to

serve as reference points during the disaster management process. According to *The

Disaster Recovery Handbook, the goal of your disaster management plan is to "minimize this chaos by providing some direction to the people on-site to get them started on the containment and recovery" (Wallace & Webber 115). Archives can accomplish this goal by developing a departmental or task-related plan (such as appraisal processing, or educational outreach for small academic archives), and then incorporating these separate plans into an overarching, staged organization-wide plan (Wallace & Webber 116). A crucial element of these plans are clear indications of how immediately important it is for certain tasks to continue as close to normal as possible (Wallace & Webber 118). Alice Cannon notes that archives and libraries should consider the likelihood of a particular risk, and then the consequences if that risk became reality before assigning "risk ratings" that prioritize and rank possible hazards (56-58). Delineating ahead of time possible risks during a crisis situation, providing documentation for the response process, and informing your staff which risks can most greatly or frequently impact an archive can help mitigate the fallout of disaster scenarios.

Despite the advantages of conducting a BIRA for a small academic archive, the subject of risk assessment has only recently been explored directly in relation to archives. Alice Cannon writes, "it has only been within the last ten years (published in 2003) that a more strategic approach to risk management has begun to take hold in the cultural heritage industry" (46). Partially due to the relative recency of convergent scholarship that considers archives and their use of risk management, this particular stage of business continuity planning is not without its faults. Cannon notes that failures in human judgment, lack of information on new or burgeoning risks, outdated risk management systems, and the relative newness of risk management as field, all pose serious challenges

to librarians and archivists (45). Additionally, a BIRA or risk assessment strategy is only effective in the event that the staff has learned the takeaways from this element of business continuity planning, and practiced their responses to these risks through training processes.

2.C. Step Three: Training Staff

Scholarship on business continuity planning typically includes sections on how to develop staff training processes, as well as testing procedures to determine the effectiveness of that training. Virginia and Michael Cerullo write, "as a component of BCP, testing is essential to determine whether the BCP is adequate to address critical risks" (71). Typically, training programs use disaster control plans as guidelines and consider weaknesses from the BIRA in order to identify the most important processes for staff to learn and practice. Often this means locating fire alarms, knowing emergency service phone numbers, and preparing for common disasters such as flooding, electrical fires, and mold damage. While disaster control plans and BIRAs help create the foundational understanding of disaster management, training prepares employees to act quickly and efficiently in the event of a disaster. Wallace and Webber write, "employee training is essential if plans are to be executed as written" (292). Oftentimes, case studies of specific or frequent disaster scenarios dictate the contents of existing training material (e.g. protocol on flooding following Hurricane Katrina).

Documentation on training staff members to be prepared for disaster scenarios frequently errs on the side of specificity. Case-studies and examples of particular fires, floods, tornados, and other disasters that have affected archives, libraries, and cultural heritage repositories often provide detailed training procedures on how to manage

particular scenarios. According to Matthews, Smith, and Knowles, cultural

heritage institutions typically face fires and flooding more than any other disaster,

creating a demand for scholarship that addresses specific fire and flood related response

protocol (6). As a result, textbooks and articles include checklists for fire and flood

management, specific chapters dedicated to managing their effects, and numerous case-

studies of archives, libraries, and cultural heritage repositories that have undergone

damages from flooding or fire. These resources often serve as important elements of a

staff member's training, and in-turn set the standard for what archivists and librarians

consider immediate risks for damages. As Matthews, Smith and Knowles note, health and

safety precautions should factor into the training process (13).

Table-top simulation exercises stand as a common form for disaster management

training used across professions, including at libraries and archives. Table-top

simulations encourage the organization's employees to analyze the fallout and direct

effects that a disaster scenario might have on their workplace and its core functions,

without directly experiencing any of the immediate damages associated with navigating

an actual disaster scenario. There is a precedent for dealing with disasters similar to

COVID-19 through these means. Neal R. Axton, a reference librarian at William Mitchell

College of Law, has practiced table-top simulations that have explicitly dealt with

pandemic situations in order help his law students understand the legal and organizational

impacts of a pandemic.[15]

Table-top exercises are not necessarily inhibited by distance between co-workers

either. In their article "Utilizing Technology Based Learning for Disaster Preparedness,"

Burkhammer, Lawner, and Burge note that technology and web-based methods of

disaster training can cover a lot of information, and adequately train employees

(26). Burkhammer et al write, "Recent developments in high fidelity simulation, virtual

reality, and internet-based training strategies have revolutionized public safety's approach

to disaster preparedness and response" (29). Digital methods should be considered viable

options during COVID-19 and this period of increased remote work.

While sources such as *The Disaster Recovery Handbook*, *The Field Guide to*

Emergency Response and Virginia and Michael Cerullo's article "Business Continuity

Planning: A Comprehensive Approach" both offer specific advice for dealing with fires

and floods, they also emphasize the importance of understanding that human

conceptualizations of disasters evolve as we experience newfound tragedies or

unanticipated events that disrupt customary work patterns. With great limitations on

working conditions, the demand for guidelines specific to navigating COVID-19 and

other viral diseases likely has increased, and professional organizations have helped fill

that gap, especially after March, 2020. For example, professional organizations now have

resource pages devoted to cleaning archival materials during COVID-19. Library and

archival associations and consortiums will continue to offer helpful enhancements to

existing scholarship on both the development of effective preventative measures and the

training of staff. Future scholarship exploring the relationship between business

continuity planning and archives should consider these training pieces published in the

wake of COVID-19.

Libraries and archives that have successfully constructed a well-thought-out and

effective internal disaster management plan likely consulted relevant materials published

by professional organizations. Professional library and cultural heritage organizations

have long provided profession-specific templates and disaster management

training information for archives, museums, and libraries. Matthews, Smith, and Knowles

discuss historically successful examples of committees and professional organizations

that created and compiled staged plans and models for disaster management in cultural

heritage institutions. For example, in 1995 the United States Federal Government created

the Heritage Emergency Task Force, whose members represented over forty professional

and service organizations, as well as a number of federal agencies, such as FEMA

(Federal Emergency Management Administration), and aimed to protect cultural heritage

institutions, such as libraries, archives, and museums by developing staged training plans

for different emergency situations and type of repositories (Matthews, Smith, & Knowles

8). Their work has helped mitigate disasters on a global scale by making materials

immediately available and safe. The importance of professional organizations in

disseminating information related to business continuity planning, but specifically

designed for libraries, archives, and cultural heritage institutions is addressed in the

following section.

3. Collaboration with Professional Organizations

One of the most evident themes in disaster management scholarship is the

necessity for collaboration between peer archival institutions and relevant professional

organizations who might lend a helping hand. Graham Matthews writes, "Around the

world, collaborative networks, informal and formal, local and regional have been

established to offer varying levels of mutual support and sharing of expertise," in

reference to creating professional networks in preparation for a disaster scenario (4).

Before disaster management scholarship even truly came into its own, cultural heritage

collections communicated with professional organizations during emergency situations to gather funding, relevant information, and specialized professional advice.

While current day beginnings of disaster management scholarship in the cultural heritage sector date back to the early 1970s, institutions relying on one another for mutual support during a period of crisis has long been the standard for archives in the United States (Matthews, Smith, & Knowles 7). For example, consider the Committee on Conservation of Cultural Resources (CCCR), which Jane Aiken writes about in her 2007 article titled "Preparing for a National Emergency: The Committee on Conservation of Cultural Resources, 1939-1944." The CCCR operated from 1939, following the German invasion of Poland, until the Second World War neared its end in 1944 (Aiken 274). When faced with a precarious domestic threat, institutions such as the National Archives and Records Administration, the Library of Congress, and the American Library Association (amongst other professional and governmental organizations) participated in a program that developed strategies designed to protect archival materials from bomb and war related damages (Aiken 275). The CCCR's ties to the ALA and federal agencies showcase how interconnected networks of professional organizations and cultural heritage repositories have been a part of disaster management for decades. Advice from professional organizations on how to navigate newfound disaster scenarios has, historically, been a useful tool for archives.

In modern history, events such as Hurricane Katrina and the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, have continued to redefine preparedness standards for disaster management (Matthews, Smith, & Knowles 7). Due to our changing conceptualizations of a disaster, the demand for collaboration between professional organizations and

archives remains constant. Iowa University Library Conservator Librarian Gary

Frost advocates for a national safety net approach to disaster management in the

aftermath of Katrina. In his article "Disaster Recovery in the Artifact Fields - Mississippi

After Hurricane Katrina," Frost writes,

> "Cooperative relations between relevant national organizations (e.g.,
>
> AASLH, AIC) could standardize the training and selection criteria for
>
> potential volunteers - conservators, museum professionals, life-safety
>
> personnel, and students enrolled in conservation training programs - to
>
> ensure teams are ready to roll into action with the first responders"
>
> (46).

Certainly, during a global pandemic unlike any viral outbreak since the 1918 Spanish flu,

the preparedness standards must change, and connections among professional

organizations and archives need to remain strong. Organizations such as the Society of

American Archivists (SAA), the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL),

and the ALA help prepare clear, concise, compiled, and accurate tools for archivists

navigating their professional life while they experience altered and limited working

conditions.

With the rise of COVID-19, there has been a boom in professional organizations'

preparing of literature on the subject of the current-day disaster management. Many

preeminent professional organizations in the field of archives have scrambled to create

and compile information concerning the standard procedures for the development of

disaster plans during recent moments of uncertainty and danger. As described by Graham

Matthews, international and domestic professional organizations "use a range of methods

to advise about disaster management" (4). Currently, professional archival and library organizations, such as the American Library Association,[16] the Association of College and Research Libraries,[17] the Public Library Association,[18] the Society of American Archivists,[19] and the Institute of Museum and Library Services,[20] amongst others, have developed resource guides, webinars, and a number of other online resources for managing library and archival collections while COVID-19 affects day-to-day operations. As Allison Payne observes in her article titled "ACRL, ARL, ODLOS, and PLA Announce Joint Cultural Competencies Task Force," the Association of College and Research Libraries recently paired with the Public Library Association and the American Library Association's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services in order to create an equity task for surrounding coronavirus related accessibility concerns. Furthermore, the Institute of Museum and Library Services recently published a webinar hosted by CDC officials on "mitigating COVID-19 when working with paper-based, circulating, and other types of collections." As Matthews' writing suggests these materials represent a range of formats, media, topics, and ideas.

The PLA recently developed a survey related to limited functionality in public libraries across the country. At the time of publication, the pandemic shut down 98% of surveyed public libraries (*Public Libraries Respond to COVID-19,* 4). In their study *Public Libraries Respond to COVID-19*, the PLA surveyed over 2,500 public libraries and detailed their typical day-to-day operations during the pandemic. Determining that public libraries often focused on developing and incorporating a number of virtual services, the PLA helps provide key information about pandemic responses at comparable institutions in the country and across the world that can serve as touchstones

for the development of pandemic-response plans. Following the survey's

findings, the PLA includes other information about relevant professional and state-run

organizations that can provide aid, resources, or services to public libraries during a

disaster like COVID-19. This survey exemplifies the demand that exists for COVID-19

related library materials from relevant professional organizations.

While there is a clear need for professional organizations to offer as much

applicable information as they can during a disaster situation, information overloads are a

common problem for archives to have to navigate during a crisis. Graham Matthews

writes, "Indeed, work on the research project underlined how difficult it is to keep track

of information appearing on websites and e-discussion lists across the world, especially

in the aftermath of major incidents" (5). According to respondents in Matthews' study,

language barriers, repeated information scattered across multiple sites, and the number of

variant disaster management templates present added layers of complication to securing

accurate and reliable information in a timely manner (5). In the case of COVID-19

response, with staff needing accurate disaster management resources, archives face a

challenging task. Scholarly research on telecommunication conveys the challenges

associated with effective communication with virtual teams and remote work. In their

article "Fostering work engagement in geographically-dispersed and asynchronous virtual

teams" (p. 2019), Niki Panteli, Zeynep Yalabik, and Andriana Rapti write, "In a working

environment, where team members rely heavily on technology for their communications

and interactions, with work being done with 'strangers' individuals may experience

feelings of discomfort and anxiety stemming from poor team relationships" (3).

Interpersonal relationships likely will play an important role during this stressful and unorthodox period of distanced work.

Methodology

This paper employs qualitative analysis of interviews with academic archivists and special collections librarians at participating college and university libraries in the Oberlin Group of Libraries. This study approaches data collection through a preliminary survey on library disaster management, with the option to participate in a voluntary semi-structured follow-up interview. Following data collection, I employed thematic qualitative analysis of gathered interviews – synthesizing their content into themes and motifs based on commonalities in answers. In the following sections, I outline the methodological process for this research study, as well as the justifications for my selection of particular approaches. Specifically, I describe my data collection process (survey and interview question design, interview structure, etc.), coding (qualitative method of data analysis), and sampling. Procedural details are included to help other students, librarians, or archivists replicate this study.

1. Research Design, Data Collection, & Data Analysis

This master's paper employs a qualitative thematic analysis research design through semi-structured interviews in order to facilitate a critical investigation of current trends in archival disaster management. This methodological research framework allows for qualitative analysis of documentable phenomena. As described in the SAGE "Methods Map," qualitative data collection is the method of "capturing unstructured data through processes of interviewing or observation."[21] Qualitative research design has the

advantage of allowing researchers to analyze and evaluate abstract and

complicated subject matter in a critical fashion. Furthermore, in her book *Application of*

Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science, Barbara

Wildemuth notes that qualitative thematic analysis "goes beyond merely counting words

or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes, and patterns that

may be manifest or latent in a particular text" (308). For this study, the survey responses

and the interviews represent the "texts," and contain manifest and latent content

concerning trends in academic archival disaster management in response to COVID-19.

   A survey (see appendix section 3) and relevant IRB consent forms were emailed to

one librarian or archivist at each Oberlin Group of Libraries member institution. The

survey questions and the semi-structured interview script are included in the appendix of

this proposal. Survey responses and interviews are limited to one staff member per

academic archive. Surveys and information on interviews were sent out in late December,

2020, and interviewing concluded at the end of February, 2021.

   Current disaster management scholarship, professional organization resources, and

journalism discussed in the literature review inform the survey and interview script

content. Surveys and interviews offer minimally invasive methods of information

gathering, which is important during COVID-19, when archivists have limited time and

resources. Furthermore, surveys and interviews can explicitly convey complex qualitative

processes and phenomena. According to Herbert and Irene Rubin's textbook *Qualitative*

Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data, qualitative interviews allow the researcher to

understand phenomena that they have not personally experienced (3).

The surveys gather introductory information about archivists' knowledge of existing institutional disaster management plans, how long they have worked at a particular location, and their workplace responsibilities. The semi-structured interviews delve into major areas of COVID-19 response and disaster management. Each small academic archive has a different staff, unique collections, and their own institutional context that dictate subtle differences in their approaches to disaster management and COVID-19 response. Qualitative interviews allow researchers to study organizational culture with nuance and an awareness of unique institutional qualities (Rubin & Rubin, 8). Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to ask follow up questions, secure abstract information, and explore detailed and complicated work processes in an intuitive fashion (Wildemuth 42). Thus, this study uses introductory surveys to garner relevant contextual information, and then follows up with semi-structured interviews in order to explore topics more fully.

In this research study, data examination and analysis are conducted through qualitative content analysis. Wildemuth writes, "during coding, theoretical propositions (i.e. relationships between variables) will occur to the researcher, and these propositions are written up in theoretical memos" (233). Wildemuth goes on to explain that the "memos" continually allow the researcher to return to the raw data gathered and evaluate its content from a different perspective (233). The spectrum of differing disaster management approaches and plans, as well as the changing institutional context of the surveyed and interviewed academic archives, suggests that the gathered data represents an array of different themes, tropes, and key ideas that may be nested in one-another.

Once those interviews were conducted, I chose themes, tropes, and

related content that best synthesized the range of interview responses. Rubin and Rubin

write, "Qualitative analysis is not about mere counting or providing numeric summaries"

(202). Rubin and Rubin further observe that researchers begin to prepare for analysis by

taking notes, recording interviews, and identifying trends (217). Through zoom

recordings and typed interview notes, I began by grouping responses to questions by type

and noting commonalities (Rubin & Rubin, 222). I chose the following five categories for

analysis after reviewing response content: disaster management plans applied to COVID-

19, immediate pandemic response, training staff for disasters, working from home, and

recommendations for peer institutions.

2. Sampling

This research study uses purposive sampling, with the Oberlin Group of Libraries

serving as the sampling frame. There are eighty-five participating liberal arts college and

university library systems in the Oberlin Group. For this study twenty-six archivists

responded to the survey, and seventeen participated in follow up interviews. On their

website, the Oberlin Group of Libraries notes their membership consists of small

academic archives, and their primary function as a consortium is to serve as a forum for

librarians to discuss "issues of common concern."[22] According to Wildemuth, in

purposive sampling "particular people," (small academic archivists and special

collections librarians, in the case of this study) "are selected from the population of

interest based on their individual characteristics" (121). Wildemuth writes, "the intent (of

purposive sampling) is to recruit a sample that is representative of the population in terms

of both central tendency and range on characteristics of interest" (121). As peer

institutions, these academic library systems engage in collaborative work and discussions revolving around professional standards of librarianship. The consortium members' shared interests and qualities make them an ideal sample frame for research concerning small academic archives' response to COVID-19. Through purposive sampling, I interviewed managing archivists of small academic archives whose different approaches to disaster management exemplify a range of experiences in the wake of the pandemic.

An archivist or special collections librarian at each participating member institution was emailed the survey. Managing archivists and department heads were given preference. When archivists completed the survey and indicated willingness to participate in a follow up interview they were contacted for scheduling. Survey and interview participants were given the option to respond anonymously. Barring anonymization, digital remote interviews conducted over Zoom were recorded for future coding use. Survey responses and interview recordings were securely stored on password protected devices.

3. Positionality

In the hopes of promoting honest and replicable research, I have included this positionality section that acknowledges any personal affiliations that I have had with relevant institutions interviewed or surveyed in this study, as well as measures I have taken to ensure trustworthiness in the research process. I surveyed and interviewed, director of Washington and Lee University Special Collections and Archives Tom Camden, who is a former supervisor. Needless to say, a prior relationship between myself and Tom Camden exists. However, my interview with Tom focuses solely on

Washington and Lee University Special Collection's disaster management and response to COVID-19. I had no other prior working or social relationships with interviewed archivists. In an attempt to further bolster the efficacy of this research study, I have included relevant materials such as the survey, interview, and coding structures in the appendices of this paper.

4. Ethics

With any serious research study, especially those that involve human subjects, informed consent is a crucial ethical consideration. According to the SAGE Methods Map, informed consent dictates that "those participating in a research study have the right to know that they are being researched, to be told fully about the purposes of research and its potential risks and benefits, and that they can withdraw their participation at any time."[23] At the beginning of the survey and each interview I offered information regarding anonymity and voluntary participation. The introductory section of the survey provides information on these topics, and the emails containing the link to the survey also included University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill IRB informed consent documentation. Additionally, I provided participating archives with a brief introduction to myself and my master's paper topic and methodology.

As previously mentioned, I offered the option to respond anonymously to surveys and interview questions. Some archivists felt that they wanted to share criticism of their parent college or university, but feared causing turmoil and opted to be anonymized. Three archivists chose to have their answers entirely anonymized, and one asked for a specific answer to be made anonymous. Through having the ability to anonymously answer questions about the effectiveness of response, these archivists felt comfortable

answering questions about assessment honestly. Others felt comfortable sharing

critical viewpoints on-the-record.

Analysis

The effects of COVID-19 still impacted all of the seventeen institutions at the time the interviews were conducted. The rapid global spread of the coronavirus exposed important accessibility barriers and future challenges for archivists and librarians. By evaluating and identifying trends in archival ethos and strategy during the pandemic, our field can critically evaluate and assess the effectiveness of disaster management policies and institutional direction. Through analysis of shared challenges, experiences, and successes of archives operating during COVID-19, disaster management plans and scholarship for archives and collecting institutions can be made more robust.

Through coding and analysis of interview responses, I identified five key areas of interest to ascertain the disaster management strategies archivists used during COVID-19 and the forward steps for continued development of this area of study. First, responses to questions about existing disaster management plans, their current state, and how the archivists view them are grouped into the "Disaster Management Plans Applied to COVID-19" section. Second, I evaluate institutions' immediate pandemic responses. This section considers common guidelines for reopening archives, parent organizational involvement, and governmental regulations related to COVID-19. Third, the "Training" section distills common tropes in institutional training for disaster scenarios and pandemic response. Fourth, I document shared experiences and challenges related to remote work expressed by interviewees. Finally, the "Recommendations for Peer

Institutions" section documents suggestions that archivists had for other

Oberlin Group of Libraries member colleges based on their experience navigating

COVID-19. The synthesis of interview responses in these sections aim to directly answer

my research question concerning current trends in academic archival disaster

management as related to COVID-19.

1. Disaster Management Plans Applied to COVID-19

The majority of interviewed and surveyed schools had a disaster management

plan in place at the time of the pandemic. This was a surprise, and a stark departure from

scholarship that suggested most institutions did not have written disaster management

policies. No interviewed institution expressly mentioned having a specific business

continuity plan. However, of the interviewed schools, eleven had plans, while five did

not. This is a high rate in comparison to Graham Matthews' study that showed only

twenty percent of cultural heritage institutions have disaster management plans.

Furthermore, institutions that directly experienced a disaster or collection damages

typically paid more attention and devoted more resources to disaster management

planning. For instance, Geoffrey Reynolds, the Director of the joint archives of Hope and

Holland Colleges, said that a devastating 1980 fire in an administrative building that

stored college records spawned a strong impetus for disaster management planning at

Hope and Holland. Archivists at Bucknell University and Gustavus Adolphus also noted

a connection between heightened awareness of disaster management planning at their

institution following disasters in their archives and libraries. Academic archives and

special collections that did not have disaster management plans usually indicated a desire

to develop them in the future, when they had appropriate resources and time.

Despite the surprising prevalence of disaster management plans at interviewed archives, they usually turned out to be of little use during the pandemic. Typical struggles that archivists faced were that their plans focused heavily on fires and flooding, were designed with the entire library or campus in mind, were outdated, or were in the process of being redone. For example, Tom Camden, Director of Washington and Lee University Special Collections, said "Disaster plans aren't very effective unless they are reviewed regularly, and they need to be updated almost annually. … Ours was woefully out of date." Suzy Taraba, the Director of Special Collections and Archives at Wesleyan University, shared that their staff was in the process of redoing a disaster plan with increased cyber-security measures, but the pandemic had limited their ability to work on this project. Even regularly updated and fully completed disaster management plans, such as those of Williams College, which included relevant contact information and multiple disaster-specific guidelines, did not include pandemic-specific information. Interviewed archivists at institutions with disaster management plans typically only quickly referred to their documentation before adopting an adaptable approach to damage mitigation based on intuition and staff perspectives.

Interview participants who noted that their respective archive had a disaster management plan in place at the start of the pandemic had different levels of involvement in the creation of the policies and guidelines. For instance, Bethany Fietcher, the University Archivist at Depauw, had only just begun her job during the pandemic and had not contributed to any disaster management policy. Fietcher noted that fulfilling reference requests was their main objective as an archive at the time of the interview, and that she had been unable to set aside time to develop and implement an archives-specific

disaster plan. This greatly contrasts to the experiences of longer tenured

archivists and librarians, such as Tom Lamb from Carleton College, who helped write

their library system's disaster management plan. However, participation in writing these

plans varied largely due to parent academic institutions and governmental bodies creating

rules, regulations, restrictions, and top-level disaster plans for colleges and universities

during the pandemic.

Liberal arts college archives and special collections departments aim to serve their

parent organizations in their institutional and educational missions. This means that

special collections librarians and archivists report to college administration and often rely

on funding from this group. Therefore, they must adhere to their rules and demands

during a chaotic period, such as the early months of COVID-19's spread. Lina Rosenberg

Foley, Archivist of Lawrence University, shared that college administrators provided

guidelines for library hours and state restrictions also impact their open status. Archives-

specific goals were the final step in this process. This limited some archivists' abilities to

make departmental decisions about processing, instruction, and reference work, as they

waited for institutional guidance.

College and university archives that did not have a disaster management plan,

such as Kenyon College and St. Lawrence University, cited time, resources, and

budgetary restrictions as prohibitive factors. Furthermore, Abigail Tayse, the College

Archivist at Kenyon College, shared that guidelines related to the pandemic came from

other governing bodies. University-wide pandemic task forces existed at multiple

colleges, and had direct effects on the archives at colleges, such as Kenyon. Additionally,

all interviewed archivists observed that state guidelines played an immediate

role in determining function, available services, and open hours.

Library-wide, university-wide, state, and federal standards impacted archives'

immediate pandemic response. Guidelines from governing bodies often dictated archives

and special collections departments first steps during the process. Every interviewed

archivist noted that their archive closed to the public at some point during March 2020.

These procedures and recommendations, especially those coming from governing bodies

with more stringent qualifications and demands (e.g., state health departments), dictated

archives' open hours, level of remote work, and number of patrons welcomed in. Many

of the interviewees observed that their institution, as liberal arts schools, prioritized

physical access to library services and spaces. For example, Adrianna Darden, the

archivist at Gusatvus Adolphus College, shared that the archives she worked in had

attempted to open up physical access to collections as soon as possible, but needed to

check in with administrators first.

While archivists often found themselves having to adapt to standards and procedures

designed and curated by parent or governmental organizations, managing archivists still

regularly sought out advice on reopening their collections from professional resources.

Archivists and special collections librarians at Depauw Univeristy, Carleton College,

Hope & Holland Colleges, Wesleyan University, Dickinson College, Williams College,

Lawrence University, Middlebury College, and three other anonymous institutions all

explicitly listed the Online Computer Library Center research project "Reopening

Archives Libraries and Museums" (REALM) as an important source. REALM aims to

provide centralized COVID-19 guidelines for a range of collecting institutions. Some of

the popular topics and ideas discussed are quarantining materials and

improving access to collections via physical layout. That being said, archivists did not

necessarily take REALM's guidelines to heart. One anonymous archivist shared that their

institution was unable to adhere to some of the stricter material quarantine guidelines on

collections with high demand. Still, through expressing explicit guidelines, REALM was

a touchstone of disaster management to this pool of interviewees that helped established a

share language around COVID-19 response.

Professional organization's webpages, webinars, and online guides to coronavirus

response were less popular than REALM, but archivists were clearly familiar with them.

Archivists from Kenyon College, Carleton College, as well as Hope and Holland

Colleges joint archives, noted that they were aware of professional organizations recent

webinars, articles, and surveys on COVID-19. Abigail Tayse from Kenyon College

continued her professional development during this period by keeping up-to-date with

these resources. However, most archivists felt that these guides, webinars, and resources

might distract them from accomplishing mission-critical goals during the pandemic, such

as assisting researchers and conducting primary source instruction. Additionally, no

interviewee expressed awareness of scholarship published in academic journals related to

library or archives specific disaster management. One anonymous institution felt that

disaster management scholarship was a fool's errand, as it dealt with a constantly

evolving issue.

Archivists also frequently turned to their colleagues and peers for advice on

navigating the pandemic. Tom Camden from Washington and Lee University Special

Collections and Archives contacted former colleagues at the College of William and

Mary Special Collections in order to gather advice. Similarly, Abigail Tayse

from Kenyon College Archives said "we've definitely talked to other colleges and

archives. We're in a consortium with 5 other liberal arts college in Ohio, so we've been

checking in on what they've been doing." Jim Gerencser, of the Dickinson College

archives, specifically cited the Oberlin Group of Libraries as a peer resource. Collecting

institutions could help provide contextual information about COVID-19 response,

procedures, and methods of opening collections back up to the public.

Whether or not the archive had a completed, partial, or nonexistent disaster

management plan, no archivists or special collections libraries directly cited their plan as

helping to mitigate COVID-19 damages. Lack of pandemic-specific information,

guidelines on working from home, or suggestions for reference and instruction at-a-

distance made disaster management plans largely irrelevant during the pandemic.

Furthermore, constantly changing governmental standards and oversight from university

and college administrators made instituting archives-specific guidelines difficult.

However, including information about transitions to remote work in disaster management

policies could help boost the relevancy of these plans in the wake of a future pandemic or

viral outbreak.

2. Immediate Pandemic Response

College and university employees across departments had a quick turnaround from

operating at normal capacity to adapting to the physical limitations put in place by

COVID-19. Despite disaster management scholarship calling for formalized business

impact risk analyses, most interviewed archives did not develop official documentation

about mission critical goals during their shutdowns and how to sustain departmental

services. Archivists noted that limited time to brainstorm in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic inhibited their ability to create workflows or written objectives about providing services. Frequently archivists and special collections librarians participated in impromptu meetings, either library-wide as at Colorado College & Lawrence University, or department specific as at Dickinson College. These sessions aimed to identify goals during forced remote work. These meetings, conducted both in-person and over the internet, helped workers prepare tasks for periods of remote work and were often hosted weekly over the duration of quarantine. Yet, despite the help these plans might provide, they were often cobbled together last second.

Archivists shared a variety of institution specific goals that came from early meetings during the pandemic. Librarians at Middlebury College, Williams College, Depauw University, and St. Lawrence University all gathered materials for scanning, digitization projects, and other archival processing work that could be accomplished remotely. Bethany Fietcher from Depauw said "Transcription has been huge for collections that have been digitized. We have been going into existing finding aids and making their data more robust." Scanning was necessary for both processing archival backlog as well as for reference requests.

Interviewees regularly mentioned important, but complicated, objectives related to providing continued reference help, research appointments, and library instruction. Academic archives and special collections at liberal arts schools typically prioritize in-person education, either for one-on-one research help or in-class instruction. Therefore, some archivists observed during early stages of online instruction that they did not have the required infrastructure to support effective remote learning. Archivists at Carleton

College and Dickinson College purchased documents cameras and other digital infrastructure in order to support these services.

As the pandemic progressed and academic archives and libraries grew more accustomed to remote-work and the challenges tied to COVID-19, archivists used these recurring meetings to discuss reopening collections. The archives at Gustavus Adolphus College, Bucknell University, DePauw University, and one anonymized institution developed plans for physically reopening physical spaces during these meetings. This meant planning foot traffic flow, preparing sanitation stations, and ensuring proper signage indicating rules and regulations.

These informal meetings essentially served the same function as business impact risk analysis, and typically asked staff members to consider their most important work processes. For example, at Washington and Lee University Special Collections and Dickinson College archives, staff members collaboratively brainstormed goals, projects, and work-tasks that might not be directly affected by the pandemic. In future, it may be advantageous to have a list of potential remote projects ready to go. For example, archivists can identify collections that need transcription, scanning, or updated metadata in order to have relevant work during transitional periods.

3. Training

Aside from Colorado College, which had a pandemic training session for college administrators, no interviewed archivists or librarians received pandemic-specific training. Joseph Watson, the Preservation Manager and a Special Collections Associate at Middlebury College, said "In the library we have not done anything pandemic-specific." Disaster management training varied widely based on institution and archival context.

Institutional setting is crucial for disaster management, as archives experience different risks based on their physical settings and collection content. For example, archives with faulty HVAC systems and plumbing should carefully observe the potential for water damages. Oftentimes campus security or building managers directly oversee training processes, falling outside the scope of archivists' responsibilities. Furthermore, when asked if they planned to institute pandemic preparedness training, most interviewees suggested that their staff's experience navigating COVID-19 was the best training they could receive. Some interviewees, such as Sylvia Kennick-Brown from Williams College archives, indicated an interest in incorporating these experiences in disaster plan documentation.

Disaster management training also occurs outside of college archives at professional conferences, webinars, and in scholarship. Geoffrey Reynolds from the joint archives of Hope and Holland College noted that he took multiple disaster management training sessions for archivists with the Wisconsin Historical Society, as recently as five years ago. However, due to the fire at Hope and Holland College Archives, there was a heightened sense of the importance of disaster management, which motivated the archivist to participate in training sessions.

More often than not, disaster training sessions for college archivists were few and far between. Rarely did interviewees express that they had undergone archives-specific training programs or table-top simulations of emergency situations within the past calendar year. Archivists and special collections librarians at a number of institutions shared that they went through active shooter trainings and occasionally covered flooding

procedures. However, there was little in the way of training to prepare archives'

staffs for the challenges present in COVID-19.

4. **Working from Home**

The national liberal arts colleges that belong to the Oberlin Group of Libraries

tend to have an institutional culture focused on supporting in-person educational efforts.

Interviewees shared their specific institutional policies and practices in regards to work-

from-home before and after the pandemic. Rarely did these college archives and special

collections encourage their staff to do remote work. When asked about their school's

work-from-home policies, Suzy Taraba from the Wesleyan University Archives simply

responded with a dramatic thumbs down action – indicating organizational hesitation

toward accepting remote work. Similarly, archivists from Colorado College, Gustavus

Adolphus College, Wesleyan University, Washington and Lee University, Williams

College, and three anonymous institutions noted that their parent institution regularly

discouraged staff from working-from-home. Other college archives, such as those of

Carleton College, Dickinson College, Kenyon College, Lawrence University, Middlebury

College, Bucknell University, Depauw University, and St. Lawrence University shared

that certain employees had specific arrangements that enabled them to work-from-home

for part of the week; however, these policies were not fully developed or prepared to be

adapted for the whole library, resulting in confusion.

Thus, due to the limited number of interviewed archivists who indicated that their

archive or library had complete and robust work-from-home policies, developing

documentations and regulations for this style of work is an important new development

that pandemic has helped initiate. Jim Gerencser of the Dickinson College

archives noted that the library-wide oversight committee that came following COVID-19

helped create written guidelines for remote work since there were no previous policies at

the school. Work-from-home marked a steep departure from standard practices at a

number of participating institutions in the Oberlin Group of Libraries archives and special

collections departments. Naturally, this transition period caused some challenges, and

brought about some unexpected advantages.

  In addition to running counter to many institutional priorities of liberal arts

colleges by pushing toward digital and distanced education, remote work caused

communication barriers, difficulties using physical materials for instruction and research,

increasing processing backlogs, and limited resources during a period of great change.

Communication barriers existed both over zoom and in-person. One archivist, who asked

to remain anonymous, shared a story about their experience communicating COVID-19

library policy to a somewhat haphazard colleague who skirted regulations. That colleague

found the archivist's reminder of the rules to be offensive, and reported the archivist to

the head of the library, although the complaint led to no action. Interviewees regularly

noted that they missed the friendly atmosphere that came along with working at academic

archives. Distanced work, increased regulations, and high stress levels from schools,

camps, and other businesses closing, created tense workplace dynamics that could

negatively impact productivity and collegiality.

  In addition to complicated work relationships, interviewees noted that long

waiting periods existed before they could offer traditional services. Archivists from

Washington and Lee and Wesleyan University archives and special collections could not

physically enter the building until they receive approval from parent

institutions. This caused immediate limitations to accessibility of materials that had not

been scanned, and narrowed staffs' abilities to process newly acquired materials.

Complications related to limited resources also manifested themselves in unexpected

fashions. For example, one anonymous archivist expressed that their institution had been

put on a hiring freeze, but elderly employees who feared the negative health

repercussions of COVID-19 still retired. This created a shortage of workers during a

period where a disaster demanded increased workload.

      Some interviewed archivists noted their long-term fears about the effect of closing

archives and moving toward remote work during the pandemic. Tom Camden from

Washington and Lee University Special Collections expressed serious concern over the

implications of librarians and archivists not being in their offices and readily accessible

for students, professors, staff, and other patrons. Camden shared "I would say ¾ of

library faculty went home and started doing remote work immediately. These are people

who normally be in their offices, have their doors open, and talk to students. Students

knew this. Suddenly, there's a dark row of office and all these rules. This made the

library become a morgue." Other interviewees expressed concerns about student

involvement during the pandemic, and its potential effects on library patronage. For

example, Abigail Tayse from Kenyon College said that their department developed goals

and objectives for student workers during remote work in order to keep them engaged

with library resources.

      By moving to work-from-home during the pandemic, college archives

experienced a novel environment for archival work. While there were clearly limitations

and complications directly resulting from this style of work, there were also advantages. Archivists from Kenyon College, Middlebury College, Wesleyan University, Hope and Holland College joint archives, and one anonymous interviewee found that their staff was more regularly on-time and focused for meetings conducted over zoom rather than in-person. Geoffrey Reynolds from Hope and Holland joint archives said "We found out a lot about our library staff, particularly the digital librarians who are thriving in this environment." Additionally, archivists at Colorado College and Bucknell University shared that their staff were able to work on backburner projects, such as updating online archival finding aids or metadata. Williams College archivist Sylvia Kennick-Brown observed that remote-work offered an optimal time to assess physical space concerns, once archivists could re-enter their stacks. Many institutions also expressed the view that there was increased flexibility and individual autonomy on project choices.

The holistic impact of work-from-home on academic archives shows that teleworking and remote work potentially has a place in academic librarianship and archives. The noted productivity advantages and increased accessibility to digital resources seem to have brought about greater usage of collections. However, the institutional barriers that exist at liberal arts colleges indicate that this particular type of academic institution may not be best suited for this style of work. Increased emphasis on developing physical and high-touch in person educational institutions communities likely outweighs the advantages of offering increased remote work flexibility. However, navigating this transitional period into a novel work environment showcased the many

complications that may occur when an academic institution must adapt to a situation that demands remote work.

5. Recommendations to Peer Institutions

I concluded interviews with a question about recommendations for peer institutions navigating similar disaster scenarios that limit in-person work. I hoped to gain potential areas of development for future disaster management and business continuity planning scholarship specific to academic archives. Interviewees found this period stressful for a variety of reasons. Work did not look and feel like it once did. Archivists potentially risked their health in order to come in person when the school allowed it. COVID-19 fallout and implications impacted interviewees' close friends and families and increased stress levels. There was no clear timeline for recovery during the early stages of the pandemic. Additionally, there was limited information on the spread of the disease. Thus, the most common piece of advice that I heard from interviewees related to the high levels of stress that archivists faced during this period. Archivists from Colorado College, Bucknell University, Kenyon College, Middlebury College, and one anonymous institution all shared that flexibility, understanding limitations, and being positive all helped workplace morale and kept employees positive. This was a foundational element to creating a productive digital work environment. Having existing documentation and policies on work-from-home may have eased the stress of this transition.

Archivists who were aware of restricted resources, and the complications that accompany monetary and staffing challenges, recognized potential issues beyond workplace morale. For instance, one anonymous interviewee identified possible challenges with increasing numbers of retirees during COVID-19 despite a hiring freeze.

Tom Lamb from Carleton College archives shared that he asked members of campus safety and security to physically check-in on buildings during periods of forced remote-work. Lina Rosenberg Foley from Lawrence University archives said that archives and library staff had to share in service responsibility during this time. Archivists from Dickinson College, Carleton College, DePauw University, Bucknell University, Colorado College, and two anonymous interviewees all suggested that limited physical access to collections increase their awareness of the importance of creating a strong digital infrastructure, or building on existing electronic exhibitions and collections. Additionally, archivists noted that creating a list of currently backlogged projects could help reduce potential buildup during a period of limited service. Tom Camden from Washington and Lee University Special Collections noted that his department worked together early in the pandemic to assemble a robust list of objectives, projects, and goals they would work on remotely. This brainstorming session helped provide ongoing work and a sense of coherence during COVID-19.

Overall, these recommendations tend to indicate that archivists focused largely on mitigating damages resultant from COVID-19 through managing individual challenges rather than modifying disaster management plans. This period offered little time for interviewed archivists to prepare their respective archives for a disaster scenario that limited in-person work. Bethany Fietcher from DePauw University said "Right now, just getting through is enough." Lina Rosenberg Foley offered a similar perspective that incorporated her sense of future professional goals, standards, and objectives. Rosenberg Foley noted that COVID-19 accelerated the timeline for professional growth and development, particularly in regards to digital archives, librarianship, and research. As

more industries explore the advantages of remote work in the wake of COVID-19, archivists and librarians should consider long-term implications of the challenges they experienced during the pandemic. Those cultural heritage institutions that struggled to provide online materials, process materials, and conduct remote instruction and reference help, must invest in digital resources, and plan their application and use in the event of disaster.

Impact, Limitations, & Conclusion

1. Impact

I hope that this research study will help provide relevant information for academic archives, especially institutions that have been negatively affected by COVID-19. Ideally, the analysis and conclusion sections will be translatable for small historical societies, special collections, academic archives, and cultural heritage institutions suffering from the negative repercussions of the coronavirus. This research study's findings should aid organizations in their attempts to assess their disaster management or business continuity plans, where they get relevant information about coping with crises, and the best preventative measures for limiting disaster fallout. This master's paper attempts to push archivists and scholars to critically think about including remote-work in disaster management plans and scholarship. The results of the interviews indicate common themes in COVID-19 response, and in their current form, disaster management plans do not effectively deal with remote work at academic archives. Furthermore, this study is easily replicable for different types or samples of archives, as the questions, methodological framework, and research process have been explicitly outlined.

2. Limitations

The most evident limitation of this study is its timing in relation to COVID-19. Despite a disrupted economy and extended quarantine, as of April, 2021 the coronavirus disease still continues to ravage the United States. Scientists and epidemiologists cannot say with certainty the pandemic's duration. While the full implications and effects of

COVID-19 have yet to be seen, archives have been immediately affected by the disease. Now is a time for reflection, agile adaptation, and fiscal responsibility, and there is valuable information to be gained about disaster management through interviewing active academic archivists.

Another limitation to this master's paper is that its scope is limited to liberal arts college archives. Size, staffing, and resources available have immediate implications on COVID-19 response. A large-scale research university library or archive may have trouble in different areas than this particular group of archives. Additionally, these archives often integrate small digital collections onto their websites. These digital collections differ in size and content from institutional digital repositories, which occasionally fall under the scope of archivists' work. These electronic records demand unique approaches to preservation, storage, access, and destruction than the records typically access and used in small academic archives.

Data analysis and conclusions can potentially help small historical societies and cultural heritage institutions suffering from the negative repercussions of the coronavirus. This research study's findings will help organizations assess their disaster management or business continuity plans, where they get relevant information about coping with crises, and the best preventative measures for limiting disaster fallout. This master's paper should push archivists and scholars to critically think about including remote-work in disaster management plans.

3. Conclusion

The identifiable trends in disaster management planning, as well as interviewees recommendations for peer institutions, indicate a gap in archival disaster management scholarship. Remote work considerations must be added to disaster plans at academic archives. Disaster management plans do exist at academic archives, potentially at a higher rate than at large-scale collecting institutions. This means that there is often a basis for expansion of scholarship and institutional policy to include remote work and COVID-19 based precautions. Their use of disaster plans also indicates that colleges and universities are aware of the potential advantages that these plans can provide. However, the lack of functional applicability in current disaster scenarios, such as COVID-19, shows that in their present form, disaster management plans do not properly convey ideal methods to mitigate damages. Furthermore, by not playing a key role in managing and alleviating negative effects of the pandemic, archivists will question their utility.

Despite the potential irrelevance of disaster management, there is a basis for expansion and improvement in those plans at small academic archives with relatively low-cost. There was a shared awareness of publicly-accessible resources, such as REALM, and publications, webinars, and resources released by academic library consortiums and professional organizations. The wide spread use of these resources indicates that academic archivists in the Oberlin Group of Libraries are aware of free resources dedicated to navigating disasters, and can use these as a basis for policy development. Additionally, evaluating project backlogs to determine potential remote work endeavors offers a high-yield and low-risk method of disaster preparation.

Disaster management and business continuity planning in more formalized sources, such as academic journals, played a less important role in the development of

disaster response in the wake of COVID-19. This is evident through the

informal nature of academic archives BIRA's and the lack of training programs, which

are expressly called for in library disaster management scholarship. All libraries focused

more on immediate response tactics without guided steps in the disaster management

plan. Developing areas prepared for digital or remote work and indicating these in

disaster management plans could aid archives in their transitions to remote work during a

disaster like the pandemic. Many archives referred to similar COVID-19 response

resources, and they also landed on similar objectives for continued processing work:

increasing digital collections and access, and changing the physical layout of archives to

accommodate necessary public health standards. These remote work projects could

potentially function as key descriptive preparation passages in disaster management

scholarship, similarly to how fire and flood response make up a bulk of disaster plans.

While some archivists expressed an interest in increased training procedures for

disaster management and COVID-19 related challenges, others felt as though there were

more crucial tasks that needed to be done in the wake of the pandemic. Restoring

archives to full capacity and services occupies a centrally important role for archives and

special collections departments. Limited resources and time could inhibit archives' ability

to train employees effectively, especially if the best disaster management training

sessions occur at for-pay professional conferences. Similarly, budgetary and staffing

restrictions limit institutional impetus to develop disaster plans as a whole, let alone the

training sessions.

Work-from-home marks the area that most dramatically needs to be added to

current disaster management scholarship. Libraries and archives faced unprecedented

challenges moving toward remote work during COVID-19. Different

contextual settings for different collecting institutions determined successes, failures, and

challenges. Specifically for small academic archives, the culture of in-person education

and work causes an oxymoronic dedication to increased access to materials, yet a reduced

audience. By investing in the digitization of high-demand collections, developing a

potential list of remote projects, and considering how an archive might conduct social

distancing do not demand high levels of effort.

Notes

[1]   See the World Health Organization's webpage titled "Q&A on coronaviruses (COVID-19)": https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses.

[2]   See Cochrane and Stolberg's March 27th, 2020 article titled "$2 Trillion Coronavirus Stimulus Bill Is Signed Into Law," from *The New York Times*: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/us/politics/coronavirus-house-voting.html.

[3]   See the Center for Disease Control's webpage titled "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): How to Protect Yourself & Others": https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html.

[4]   See Neff's August 10th, 2020 article titled "Coronavirus vaccines 101: What you need to know" from *UCHealth Today*: https://www.uchealth.org/today/coronavirus-vaccines-101-what-you-need-to-know/.

[5]   See Hinchliffe and Wolff-Eisenberg's March 15th, 2020 blog post titled "Academic Library Strategies Shift to Closure and Restriction: The Next 48 Hours of Academic Library Response to COVID19," from *Ithaka S+R*.

[6]   See Kim, Law, and Rounsville's May 21st, 2020 article titled "COVID-19 and US higher education enrollment: Preparing leaders for the fall" from *McKinsey & Company*: https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-us-higher-education-enrollment-preparing-leaders-for-fall#.

[7]   See Mckenzie's April 17th, 2020 article "Libraries Brace for Budget Cuts" from *Inside Higher Ed*: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/17/college-librarians-prepare-looming-budget-cuts-and-journal-subscriptions-could-be.

[8]   See Graham's chapter "Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives – an Introduction" from *Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives* (p. 1).

[9]   See Jackson's chapter "In Case of Fire" from *Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives* by Graham Matthews and John Feather.

[10] See Matthews' chapter "Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives – an Introduction" Matthews from *Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives* (p. 4-6).

[11]   See Mansell's chapter "Disaster Control Plans" from *Disaster Management in Libraries and Archives* (p. 31).

[12]   See Matthews, Smith, Knowles' section "Good Practice – Guidance, Advice, Support Offered" from "Disaster Management in Archives, Libraries, and Museums: an International Overview (p.10).

[13]   See Mansell's chapter "Disaster Control Plans" from *Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives* for information on support from peer institutions (p. 24).

[14] See Cannon's chapter "Risk Management" from *Disaster Management for Libraries and Archives* (p. 41).

[15]   See Axton's article "Law in the Time of Cholera: Teaching Disaster Law as a Research Course," published in May, 2011 by the *American Association of Law Libraries*.

[16]   See the American Library Association's webpage titled "Handling

Library Collections and Materials During a Pandemic":

http://www.ala.org/alcts/preservationweek/resources/pandemic

[17]   See the Association of College and Research Libraries Webinar titled "Managing

Remote Workers" from April 2020:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4YxJVdwQW0.

[18]   See the Public Library Association's survey results titled *Public Libraries'*

Response to Covid-19 published in April, 2020: http://www.ala.org/pla/issues/covid-

19/surveyoverview

[19]   See the Society of American Archivists' webpage titled "Resources for the

Response to COVID-19 Health Crisis": https://www2.archivists.org/resources-for-

response-to-covid-19-health-crisis.

[20]   See the Institute of Museum and Library Services' webinar titled "Mitigating

COVID 19 when Managing Paper Based, Circulating, and other types of Collections"

from April, 2020: https://www.imls.gov/webinars/mitigating-covid-19-when-managing-

paper-based-circulating-and-other-types-collections.

[21]   See the SAGE Research Planner "Methods' Map – Qualitative Data Collection":

https://methods-sagepub-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/methods-map/qualitative-data-

collection.

[22]   See the Oberlin Group of Libraries' webpage titled "About Us":

https://www.oberlingroup.org/about-oberlin-group.

[23]   See the SAGE Research Planner "Method's Map – Informed Consent":

http://methods.sagepub.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/methods-map/informed-consent

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Appendix

1. Email Recruitment

Dear _____ (fill in proper name for managing archivist),

Hello, my name is Jake MacDonnell and I am a 2nd year graduate student pursuing a Master's in Library Science with a concentration in Archives and Records Management from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am currently conducting a research study for my master's paper, a graduation requirement for MSLS students at UNC. My faculty advisor for this paper is Professor Helen Tibbo, a former SAA president. I am studying the effects of COVID-19 on small academic archives, and the types of disaster management plans, business continuity plans, and contingency plans that they have employed in the wake of the pandemic.

You are receiving this email because you are a participating library in the Oberlin Group of Libraries that additionally has a special collections and/or archives department. Would you be willing to fill out the following online survey? The process should not take more than 5-10 minutes, and asks if you would be willing to participate in a longer, less cursory, interview on disaster response. Thank you for your time and consideration in this process. This is a crucial time for libraries and archives of all shapes and sizes, and this research aims to consider the methods that best prepare cultural heritage institutions for unforeseen disasters, such as COVID-19. For questions concerning the function and use of this research study, potential participants should contact me at jmacdonnell@unc.edu, or by phone at 540-460-0337. For questions about your rights as a participant in the research you may contact the IRB. To identify my study with the IRB use the following information: study number is 20-3049. Email - irbis@unc.edu, and phone - 919-966-3113.

Best wishes,

Jake MacDonnell
UNC-CH SILS MSLS ARM '21

2. Survey

The following survey asks a set of questions focused on small academic archives responses to COVID-19 and working-from-home scenarios, with a particular focus on liberal arts college and special collections. Name and demographic information are optional for completing this survey, although they are strongly preferred. That being said, if you wish that your institution not be publicly associated with your responses, please indicate so at the end of the survey. The responses will be used for Jake MacDonnell's Master's Paper "COVID-19 Contingencies: Disaster Management in Small Academic Archives," for UNC-CH SILS 2021 on the Archives and Records Management pathway on small academic archives, COVID-19, and disaster management. Relevant instructions regarding answering the survey's questions will be specified in the question itself, although the survey is mostly short response. Short responses should be between 1 and 3 sentences. The survey should take between 5 to 10 minutes.

1. Where do you work?

2. What is your position at your place of work & how long have you worked here?

3. How many full-employees work in your archives/special collections? _____
   Part time? _____ (if additional workplace context is necessary to answer this question please fill in below).

4. Did your place of work transition to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, is your place of work still currently operating through remote work?

5. Does your place of work have a disaster management plan, a business continuity plan for disaster scenarios, a contingency plan, or any other contingency planning documentation? Please mark "Yes," or "No." If "Yes" please include the titles of any related documentation in your response.

6. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview concerning your place of work's COVID-19 response and disaster planning? Follow-up interviews would take between 30 minutes to an hour and would concern disaster management plans, what services your archive has offered during the pandemic, and any other challenges your archive has faced in the wake of the pandemic. Mark "Yes," or "No."

7. Do you want your survey responses to be anonymous in the event they are used in my Master's Paper? Mark "Yes," or "No."

8. Would you like your institution to be anonymized in respect to your survey answers? In the event you have selected this, it is less likely that you will be asked to participate in a follow-up interview on your disaster management response.

Mark "Yes," or "No." If you have additional clarification on this feel free to add that.

9. Any other information you wish to share?

3. Interview Script

At the beginning of each interview, I will review the guidelines laid out in the survey about informed consent, voluntary personal and institutional anonymity in answers, and the ability of the research subject to stop participating if they ever feel uncomfortable. Furthermore, I will remind them of my status as a MSLS student studying Archives and Records Management and gathering data for SILS master's paper. I will additionally provide a brief introduction so as to help start the interview. I will ask the interviewee if they are comfortable with me recording the interview over audio for coding purposes later. I will take notes throughout the interview regardless of whether or not there is an audio recording of the interview.

1. Did your archive or special collections department have a disaster management, business continuity, or contingency plan that went into effect in the spring of 2020?
    a. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, were you aware of these documents or policies before COVID-19?
    b. To the extent of your knowledge, how closely has your institution followed the protocol of any disaster management or business continuity plan?
    c. Were you directly involved in the creation of this/these policies and documentation?
        i. What guidelines, documentation, or publications did you base this policy off of?
        ii. Did you use professional organization's pages on the pandemic?

2. Are you aware of BIRA's (business impact risk analysis) or other risk management strategies that your archive may employ?
    a. Did your archive conduct a BIRA (business impact risk analysis) in order to determine important resources and services during the pandemic?
        i. If yes, what were those services and resources that you all determined were mission critical?
        ii. What services have you offered in response to COVID? Any online services or resources?

3. Were you required to go through disaster management training following your hire?
    a. Did you receive any training on disaster management situations in the past calendar year?
        i. Please describe any disaster management training.
        ii. Did you receive any tabletop simulation style training in the past calendar year? Any pandemic-specific training before March of 2020?

4. As far as you are aware, were there any guidelines in these policies about working-from-home?
    a. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please describe the nature of these guidelines to the best of your ability.
        i. Did these adequately serve you well during pandemic management?
        ii. If you have worked-from-home during this period please briefly describe common work-related activities that you have participated in from a distance. Some common examples might be processing new collections, digitizing collections, appraisal work, etc.
    b. In your opinion, what are the advantages to working-from-home? If not, please explain why.
    c. In your opinion, what are the disadvantages to working-from-home? If not, please explain why. _____
    d. If you had to offer suggestions for other institutions navigating working-from-home, what would they be?

5. What unexpected challenges and changes have highlighted your institution's experience navigating COVID-19?
    a. How effective has the disaster management plan been for this particular crisis?
    b. Have there been successes or failures that illuminate future goals?
    c. Have you felt that certain resource or human capital limitations have made mission-critical work processes difficult?