

I have to say that this reading this week was spectacular, especially the one asking us how we can help reference archivists. This reading stood out to me for various significant reasons, but I think the most important reference in the reading is how we are seen by the public. Since social media has been booming in the 21st century and information travels faster beyond our comprehension, I think focusing on addressing how we function vs looking is an important subject to cover. This passage from the reading stated this:

In movies an archives-like storehouse is often a gloomy inner sanctum where a monkish guardian presides over mounds of books and manuscripts. This character is either zealously overprotective of his dusty charges or so vague that he leaves inquirers to rummage around by themselves. Sometimes fictional archivists even lend out documents (Thompson, 2019).

I really found that analysis rather frustrating because my days at UCSC were not that grim. I have had difficulty finding material in libraries before, but accessing records were never easy and not dusty and falling apart. They describe this scenario like the opening of a Ramsey's Kitchen Nightmare episode. I am not the most organized individual on the planet, but I would hope that individuals would attempt to organize better than in the scene described above? Right?

It is entirely possible that we have archivists who has mismanaged material all the time. That possibility is out there, I just have yet to see it. What I have seen is what has been presented in the article and it says:

The reality is that reference services operate in an organized and controlled fashion using modern information technology. Reference can happen

- At a distance without anyone conversing: by, say, posting material online along with the all-important information that tells you what (and why) it is; or by compiling and posting online research guides to common types of records.
- At a distance with lots of dialogue over email, phone, or even social media.
- In person in the archival institution, by asking and answering questions, and by physically sharing access to documents.

Regardless of the space – physical or cyber – in which archivists and researchers come together, they all happen in a place of privacy. Archives workers are professionally and ethically bound to treat your inquiry and all your information confidentially (unless you request otherwise) (Thompson, 2019)

I know this is the reality of reference archivists and feedback for their profession is significantly important. I loved this reading because it shows the guideline of how to understand and help a reference archivist because that will help you when trying to identify your needs for the given record.

References

Thompson, S. (2019, February 8). How can you help archivists to help you? Reference service from our side of the desk. Retrieved from <https://peelarchivesblog.com/2019/01/23/how-can-you-help-an-archivist-to-help-you-reference-service-from-our-side-of-the-desk/>