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*Standards of the International Council of Archives in the Context of
Contemporary Archival Paradigm*

Summary

In the second half of the last century in the theory of archival new comprehensions appeared based on recognition of the importance of the context in culture, influence of the post-modernism and drastic technological changes. Archival paradigm has changed. Modern archival paradigm brings reconceptualization of basic archival principles. Basic object of old paradigm was document and of new is information. Connection of a document to its unique place of origin as it was in the traditional hierarchy of organizational structure was abandoned and document is treated as virtual and elastic concept reflecting those functions and processes of author that had brought to its creation. Fund is not observed as physical entity, but as series of relations between documents, creator and the business processes. Those relations and connections do not have to be expressed by physical grouping and archival preservation, but are primarily expressed by description that is independent of physical location and arrangement of documents. It is required from the archival practice to direct analyzing of documents to analyzing of functions, processes and transactions that caused creation of the records. That means that process of arranging the documentation will change as well as its description and respectively preparation of finding aids. New approach suggests that reconstruction of a fund is to be done conceptually through description instead physically by arrangements. Basic principles for valuating archival material have been also changed. While in traditional archival basic criteria for evaluation of the archival material is document contents, contemporary archival evaluates archival material according to the functions of its author. Traditional archival paradigm treats archives as neutral treasury of records, while contemporary paradigm is based on thesis that neutrality of archives is myth, that through archives learning about the past could be controlled. New Concept reconsiders the role of the archivist as mediator between a document and a user.

Archival standards come from new archival reality and they are response of academic community as increased changes in both archival theory and practice. International Council on Archives in order to improve accessibility and better understanding and interpretation of the archival material, developed four professional descriptive standards: ISAD(G), ISAAR(CPF), ISDIAH and ISDF. Those standards have been at a present basic tool for transformation of information from traditional archival information system into structural information without which the use of new contemporary communication and information technologies is impossible.