Users' Opinions of Archival Display

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with assistance from
Penka Stoyanova

This paper reports on a study that used focus group research to obtain the opinions of archival users on the content and presentation of descriptions in archival information systems. The research builds on and extends a previous research study on bibliographic displays (Cherry and Howarth, 1994). This study addressed two research questions: 1) What information about archival materials would users like to see displayed in an OPAC or on the web? and 2) How would the users like the material to be displayed? Twenty-seven archival patrons, including doctoral students, genealogists, and consultants took part in the study. Displays from four existing archival information systems, one display developed for an Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and a display based on the findings of Luk's study (1996) were used in the study. Preferences for certain display features (e.g., the use of labels) were consistent with the findings of the earlier study. However, the participants in this study found many elements in the archival display difficult to understand. Furthermore, they evaluated the importance of the data elements differently than the participants in Luk's study. The paper concludes with suggestions for designing more usable archival displays.

Introduction

Archival description is similar, but not the same as bibliographic description. Library cataloguing shares the same primary purpose as archival description, that is, providing users with access to material to fulfill an information need. However, library catalogues focus primarily on providing access to discrete items while archival finding aids enable access to groupings or aggregates of records. Records are created to support an organization's or individual's functions and to preserve the value of records as evidence of actions and activities they must be understood in the context of their creation. The context is presented by describing the fonds or the whole of the records before describing its parts, i.e., series or files. A fonds is the "whole of the documents, regardless of form or medium, automatically and organically created an/or accumulated and used by a par-
ticular individual, family or corporate body in the course of that creator's activities and functions." (Bureau of Canadian Archivists 1990). To represent the hierarchical nature of archival material, archivists create multi-level descriptions that link a description of a fonds to descriptions of its parts. Furthermore, archival descriptions contain many elements that relate to the context of the records that are not relevant to library material, e.g. an agency history, or restrictions on access. During the last decade, Canadian archivists have concentrated much effort in developing Canadian Rules for Archival Description (RAD) to standardize their descriptive practices and to enable users to access information as efficiently and independently, as possible. RAD has been widely implemented by Canadian archivists, but to date, no systematic study has been undertaken to discover whether RAD-compliant descriptions help users locate what they need.

**Literature Review**

Only two research studies have investigated the ability of users to understand and use archival descriptions. Young and Wiltshire Management Consultants (1992) conducted a study of the patrons of the National Archives of Canada to evaluate the Archives' descriptive system and users' satisfaction with it. They found evidence that users who understood the background and the history of the material consulted were more satisfied with the archives finding aids. Furthermore, many users needed to consult an archivist to receive assistance in using the tools. Spindler and Pearce-Moses (1993) studied users' comprehension of archival descriptions. They found that users had difficulty interpreting the dates of creation element and linear extent statements.

Although there is a dearth of research on archival description, research on users' preferences for OPAC displays provides some interesting insights. The most recent studies were conducted at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Information Studies, as part of 3 year displays project. (Cherry and Howarth 1994) A focus group study conducted by Annie Luk (1996) is particularly relevant to this current research. Luk used focus groups to discover what users find more or less useful in a display. The findings of her study were consistent with other user studies and design guidelines. The most used bibliographic elements were International Standard Book Number (ISBN), Library of Congress Control Number (LCCN). Luk's study strongly preferred the prototype constructed according to design guidelines. The findings to archival description is unknown. Luk's study and used focus group to investigate what users want in a display and to study the relevant research to archival displays.

**Research Questions**

This study addressed 3 questions.

- Will users prefer an archival display criteria to design guidelines over archival display systems? What formatting features do they like?
- Do the elements in existing archival description systems meet the needs of users?
- What would an "ideal display" design look like?

**Subjects**

Twenty-seven participants took part in the study. The subjects had university degrees with 29% PhD program, and another 24% (7) having a masters degree. The participants were frequent users (17) having visited an archives more than 10 times, and only 26% having used an archives less than the same period. The purpose of their visits were research (41%), genealogical research (41%), academic work (7%), and biographical research (4%).
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the hierarchical nature of archival material, ar-
dnel descriptions that link a description of a 
of its parts. Furthermore, archival descrip-
tions that relate to the context of the records 
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a effort in developing Canadian Rules for Ar-
y to standardize their descriptive practices and 
ass information as efficiently and independ-
has been widely implemented by Canadian 
no systematic study has been undertaken to 
compliant descriptions help users locate what 
consistent with other user studies and design guidelines for bibli-
ographic displays. The most used bibliographic elements were Title, 
Author, and Subjects while the most infrequently used bibliographic 
elements were International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and Li-
brary of Congress Control Number (LCCN). The participants in 
Luk’s study strongly preferred the prototype display which she had 
constructed according to design guidelines. The relevance of these 
findings to archival description is unknown. This research adapted 
Luk’s study and used focus group to investigate what archival users 
want in a display and to study the relevance of OPAC design re-
search to archival displays.

Research Questions

This study addressed 3 questions.

- Will users prefer an archival display created according 
to design guidelines over archival displays from existing 
systems? What formatting features do users prefer?

- Do the elements in existing archival displays meet the 
needs of users?

- What would an “ideal display” designed by users look 
like?

Subjects

Twenty-seven participants took part in the study. All but two of 
the subjects had university degrees with 29% (8) being enrolled in a 
PhD program, and another 24% (7) having completed their masters 
degree. The participants were frequent users of archives with 64% 
(17) having visited an archives more than 12 times in the last year 
and only 26% having used an archives less than 6 times during the 
same period. The purpose of their visits included school related 
research (41%), genealogical research (41%), writing a book (7%), 
work (7%), and biographical research (4%).
Methodology

Each focus group session consisted of four sections:

- the participants completed a consent form, an audio recording release form and a background questionnaire.
- the moderator led a structured discussion about six different displays using a set of questions.
- the participants completed one questionnaire which solicited the participant’s evaluation of the six displays and ranked 32 data elements in their order of importance. The elements were randomized on the form.
- the participants had an unstructured discussion in which they designed their “ideal display”.

The displays came from a variety of places. Three displays came from existing archival systems. A display from a library system that included archival material was captured from the web. The information from that description was then input into two other archival systems and their displays were used. These displays were created for this study, but they followed the display formats used by the archives’ information system. Another archives used the information in the description to create a display consistent with a prototype it was developing for its new information system. A group of students working on an Encoded Archival Description (an SGML coding standard developed by the Society of American Archivists) used the information in a display for their project using Panorama Pro. Their style sheet was loosely based on a display from the Library of Congress. Finally, one of the displays was created by the principle researcher. It was based on Luk’s prototype display which used the features recommended in design guidelines. (Chan 1995)

Findings

Rating of the displays

Sixteen participants (59%) preferred display 2, seven (26%) preferred display 6 and four (15%) preferred display 4 (see Appendix 1). The participants preferred the display created according to the design principles and based on Luk’s prototype. Participants commented that formatting features, such as typefaces, lists, labels, white space and justification, and too much information on the screen made the displays difficult to read.

Lists can help people locate information easily. During the discussion, 18 of the 27 participants increased their ability to quickly browse a display. The Scope and content element. These findings were consistent with findings of earlier studies on OPAC design.

The participants liked labels but they found them difficult to read. They had particular problems with the dates that were used in the library system. For example, one participant found the label publication information which was used to describe the dates of creation element very confusing.

Ranking of the elements

The participants were asked to rank the elements in their order of importance in the process of selecting archival material. The list of elements included all of the elements usually used in Archival Description at all levels of description. Each element was ranked number one it was assigned 100 points, ranked second it received 90 points, etc. If an element was not ranked received zero points. The rankings appear in Table 1 below. The results from the experiment are presented in Figure 1.
section consisted of four sections: completed a consent form, an audio form and a background questionnaire. had a structured discussion about six using a set of questions. completed one questionnaire which participant’s evaluation of the six displays data elements in their order of importance were randomized on the form. had an unstructured discussion in their “ideal display”.

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sign principles and based on Luk’s prototype display. The participants commented that formatting features such as use of bold typefaces, lists, labels, white space and justification improved the readability of the displays. They also noted that abbreviations, repetition, and too much information on the screen made the display difficult to read.

Lists can help people locate information quickly and efficiently. During the discussion, 18 of the 27 participants commented that lists increased their ability to quickly browse a display especially for the Scope and content element. These findings are consistent with the findings of earlier studies on OPAC design (Chan 1995).

The participants liked labels but they found some of the terms used in the labels confusing. They had particular difficulty with labels that were used in the library system. For example, they found the label publication information which was used in one system to describe the dates of creation element very confusing.

**Ranking of the elements**

The participants were asked to rank the elements of a display in their order of importance in the process of selecting archival material. The list of elements included all of the elements in the Rules for Archival Description at all levels of description. Every time an element was ranked number one it was assigned 32 points, if it was ranked second it received 31 points, etc. Elements that were not ranked received zero points. The rankings were compiled and appear in Table 1 below. The results from the rankings are also presented in Figure 1.

19% preferred display 2, seven (26%) preferred 3 and (15%) preferred display 4 (see Appendix 1).
Table 1. Ranking of Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Call number (i.e., the number used to retrieve the material)</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A description of the scope and content of the material</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Notes on availability of finding aids (e.g., file lists, indexes)</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Extent of the material (Number of photographs, number of pages)</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Type of material (e.g., maps, photographs)</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Restrictions on accessing the material</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Related groups of records in the same repository</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dates of creation of the material</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Terms of the use and/or reproduction of the material</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Form or genre of the material, (e.g., Diaries)</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Creator of the Material</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The locations of the originals, if the archives holds only copies</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Language of the material</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Biographical sketch of the person who created the material</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Availability of material in other formats, (e.g., also available on optical disks)</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Series information</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Notes about other records by the same creator in other archives</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Accompanying material</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Notes on the physical condition of the material</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Subtitle</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>History of the organization that created the material</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Notes on how the material was acquired by the archives</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Publication information, if published</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Edition information (1st draft)</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Description of anyone other than the creator who owned or controlled the material</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Notes that indicate when other material by the same creator may be transferred to the archives</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Editor of the edition</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Notes on any conservation work done on the material</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Source of the title if it was taken from somewhere other than the material</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Main title in a second or other language</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Ranking of the Elements

The elements Title, Call number, and Scope are ranked first, second, and third overall, followed closely by the elements of the material, and Types of material. Twelve participants, and 12 participants ranked call number, scope, and type of material, respectively.

In the middle range of overall ranking were elements such as Extent of the material, Related groups of records, Dates of creation of the material, and Terms of the use and/or reproduction of the material.

Elements that were ranked as important by at least ten participants were Editor, Source of supplied title, and Call number.

This is similar to the ranking of the bibliographic elements of archival material, with the differences arising from the fact that the study except archival description has many more elements in the study except archival description has many more elements in the study.
### Ranking of the Elements

The elements *Title*, *Call number*, and *Scope and content* ranked first, second, and third overall, followed closely by *Finding aid note*, *Extent of the material*, and *Types of material*. *Title* was ranked first by 15 participants, and 12 participants ranked call number first.

In the middle range of overall ranking were the elements *Restrictions on access*, *Subjects*, *Related groups of records*, *Dates of creation*, *Terms of use and/or reproduction*, *Form or genre of the material*, *Creator of the material*, *Locations of the originals*.

Elements that were ranked as important by less than three participants were *Editor*, *Source of supplied title*, and *Parallel title*.

This is similar to the ranking of the bibliographic element in Luk's study except archival description has many elements not relevant to library material. For example, library displays normally do not contain *Scope and content* elements or *Restrictions on access*, *Related groups of records*, *Terms of use and/or reproduction*, or *Location of original notes*.
Content

The participants considered the Scope and content element to be very important. Some wanted the Scope and content to contain lists of the series, while others preferred to have the element start with a short paragraph that provided a short overview of the material.

The participants commented that the Biographical sketch helped them identify sources relevant to their research. Short succinct biographies were preferred over long ones. Many participants wanted the Biographical sketch put at the end of the display.

The extent of the material was rated as 5th most important element, but many participants had problems interpreting extent statements. When asked if anything in the display was confusing, the participants commented:

S22: I don’t know about misleading, but what exactly is 12 metres; I’m assuming m stands for metres of textual records; it doesn’t really tell me much of anything.

S23: Yes, I had the same question, and I was laughing to myself and thinking is this twelve miles? But no, it was metres. Maybe archivists like to tell people that there’s twelve metres but does it mean twelve metres high or twelve metres long?

Participants found the some of the notes very confusing. For example, they had difficulty with Source of supplied title, Finding aid and the Accession note. One participant commented:

S33: “Source of supplied title: Title based on contents of the fonds.” Well I would assume that to be true. It would not make sense to do otherwise. So I’m not quite sure why that’s relevant to be noted? It just takes up space. The second one is accessions. I have no idea what that means.

Moreover, the use of the word fonds (word that RAD requires in the title) in the Title confused many of the participants. In each group, the participants were hesitant to admit they did not know the meaning of the word until someone else did. Then did the rest of the group state that the word fonds meant either. The comments about the time that 15 to 20 minutes after each session started, the word fonds presented barriers to understanding.

S35: Oh, it’s Margaret Laurence! It was the fonds confusing me... I just didn’t know who Margaret Laurence fonds. I was just thinking about that. But it took me away from talking about Margaret Laurence. I was worried of the fonds... which made me interested in what the moving image was about because we don’t get to see a lot of her...

Some thought fonds was a name.

S53: At the very top it says MARGARET LAURENCE FONDS, this is her entire name.

S51: Actually, I had a big argument with the Ontario the other day about how everybody has the same last name.

However, when the meaning of the word fonds was explained, all participants agreed that it was important information not be conveyed in an archival description.

Some participants suggested that a glossary of terminology would be extremely helpful.

The content and format of the displays permitted accessing the material. The frustration of having terminology that one does not understand.

S25: If it’s [the goal of archival description] making the material accessible to people, then...
ordered the Scope and content element to be very detailed the Scope and content to contain lists of the referred to have the element start with a short and a short overview of the material.

Presented that the Biographical sketch helped them a lot to their research. Short succinct biographies of long ones. Many participants wanted to cut at the end of the display.

Material was rated as the most important element, had problems interpreting extent statements. Presentation in the display was confusing, the partici-

now about misleading, but what exactes, I'm assuming m stands for metres; it doesn’t really tell me much of the same question, and I was laugh-

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The word fonds (word that RAD requires in confused many of the participants. In each were hesitant to admit they did not know the meaning of the word until someone else brought it up. Only then did the rest of the group state that they did not know what fonds meant either. The comments about the fonds were made about 15 to 20 minutes after each session started. The presence of the word fonds presented barriers to understanding the rest of the description.

S35: Oh, it’s Margaret Laurence! It’s our Margaret Laurence! It was the fonds that was confusing me.... I just didn’t know what fonds... or Margaret Laurence fonds. I was just keeping quiet about that. But it took me away from the fact that we were talking about Margaret Laurence, I was so worried of the fonds... which makes me even more interested in what the moving image records is, because we don’t get to see a lot of her.

Some thought fonds was a name.

S53: At the very top it says “FONDS: MARGARET LAURENCE FONDS”. It seems like this is her entire name.

S51: Actually, I had a big argument at the Archives of Ontario the other day about how come everybody has the same last name.

However, when the meaning of the word was explained, all participants agreed that it was important information that should be conveyed in an archival description.

Some participants suggested that a glossary that explained archival terminology would be extremely helpful.

The content and format of the displays presented certain barriers to accessing the material. The frustration of having to use a display with terminology that one does not understand was summed up this way.

S25: If it’s [the goal of archival description] making material accessible to people, then don’t build these
barriers between the ordinary people and the material. The other image I've used is... I have needle work, and it looks very patterned on one side, you turn it over, it's a crazy quilt. So it makes sense to the archivist, in terms of what they have to do in order to turn the material to the people. But don't turn the crazy quilt side out because on your side it looks neatly printed, but to us all that's spread on the back doesn't make any sense at all. So you have to turn it around and write it in language that we can understand, and get to us.

During the last part of the session the participants created their own ideal display. The participants wanted the Call number, Title and Scope and content at the beginning of the record and the Biographical sketch near the end. They wanted a Scope and content which contained a brief overview followed by a list of the series. One group wanted the list to contain the titles of the series, their extent, their dates and their call numbers, if appropriate. They also wanted to be able to move from the brief description to a fuller description. This group wanted each screen to display a header with the call number and title of the fonds. Their ideal display is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Ideal Display, Group 1, Screens 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call #</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator: Date/Period of Creation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content: (Paragraph Style - Brief)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of series Series Extent Date Number (Hyperlinked to more detailed screens)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

The results from this study confirmed that the display created according to design guidelines and the existing systems. The findings about preference of the displays are consistent with other use displays and with design guidelines. Furthermore, the archival users have specific preferences for displaying in terms of content and format. Some of the displays they created could be used for future prototypes.

In terms of the content of the displays, the study showed that the elements in existing archival displays did not meet the needs of our users. However, the users expressed a desire for the inclusion of glossaries, online help, electronic forms which are presently missing in existing systems. Some aspects of the overall use of archival terminologies, dates, and labels were identified.
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image I’ve used is... I have needle
oks very patterned on one side, you
a crazy quilt. So it makes sense to
terms of what they have to do in
material to the people. But don’t
quilting side out because on your side it
anted, but to us all that’s spread on
make any sense at all. So you have
and write it in language that we
and get to us.

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Group 1, Screens 1 and 2

Title

Date/Period of Creation:

Content:
- Brief

Date Number
more detailed screens)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call #</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access Conditions
Usage
Accessibilitiy - condition of the material
ILL
Reproduction

Related Material
-here
-elsewhere (hyperlink to other archives pages)

How and when acquired

Biographical sketch

Conclusion
The results from this study confirmed that archival users prefer a
display created according to design guidelines over the displays from
existing systems. The findings about preferred formatting features
of the displays are consistent with other user studies of bibliographic
displays and with design guidelines. Furthermore, the results showed
that archival users have specific preferences concerning archival dis-
plays in terms of content and format. Some of the “ideal displays”
they created could be used for future prototypes.

In terms of the content of the displays, the results of this study
showed that the elements in existing archival displays meet most of
the needs of our users. However, the users also suggested the inclusion
of glossaries, online help, electronic finding aids, and indexes,
which are presently missing in existing systems. Some problems
with the overall use of archival terminology in the displays (e.g.,
dates, and labels) were identified.
The findings of this study provide insights into the use and usefulness of existing displays. They also suggest that archivists should incorporate the findings from OPAC research into the design of their systems. However, there are areas where archivists will have to conduct their own studies because the needs of archival users will be similar but not the same as those of library users. Research on multilevel description is needed to discover how to display the hierarchical nature of archival material. Archivists need to study their users to discover what the users understand about archival displays and systems. Archivists need a better understanding of their users’ needs so that archival displays are not “crazy quilts.” With appropriate research, archivists will be able to turn archival displays around. They will be able to create displays that are written in a language that patrons understand and with which they feel comfortable. These displays will present the “neatly printed” side to archival users.

References


Appendix 1

Display 1

Screen 1

F0341
Margaret Laurence fonds

Title:
Margaret Laurence fonds

Publication info:
1959-1987

Physical description:
12 m of textual records. - 16 audio cassettes. - ca. 100 photographs : b&w and col. ; 28.5 x 22 cm or smaller

Biographical note:
Margaret Laurence (1926-1987), writer, was born in Neepawa, Manitoba and educated at United College in Winnipeg, Manitoba (BA 1947). Following her marriage to John Laurence (1947), she lived in Somaliland and the Gold Coast (now Somalia and Ghana). In the 1950s, Laurence returned to Canada in 1957. She moved to England in 1962 and returned to Canada in 1965. In 1974 she settled in Lakefield, Ontario. Laurence served as a writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto in 1969 and was named chancellor of Trent University (Peterborough, Ontario) in 1981. Laurence was a founding member of the Writers Union of Canada, but left the organization in a dispute over its acceptance of money from the Canadian government. Active in peace organizations and intensely involved in women’s groups, Laurence died in 1987, days after the publication of her final novel. She was named Companion of the Order of Canada (1971) and was awarded the Molson Prize in 1973.

Abstract:

Access restriction:
Access is unrestricted.

Terms of use/repro:
Effective January 1, 1995, researchers wishing access to the Margaret Laurence fonds must sign the Access and Use Agreement form before access is granted.

Associated materials:
There are Margaret Laurence manuscripts at McMaster University Library.

Index note:
The fonds is also available.

Screen 2

Interested in women’s concerns, Laurence views and works did cause controversy. Her books drew criticism from certain elements in Laurence’s adopted community. This group tried to have books removed from the school curriculum because of their alleged pornographic content. Margaret Laurence was the author of five novels, including the Manawaka quartet ("The stone angel," "A Jest of God," "The fire eater," "The Diviners."), short stories, essays, travel memoirs and children’s books. She was named a Companion of the Order of Canada (1971) and was awarded the Molson Prize in 1973.

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Index note:
The fonds is also available.
CALL NUMBER: 341-1

TITLE: Margaret Laurence fonds. - 1953-1987

EXTENT: 12 m of textual records. 260 photographs and other graphic materials (posters, drawings, etc.). 35 sound recordings. 6 moving image recordings

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: Access is unrestricted

TERMS OF USE AND REPRODUCTION: Effective 1 January 1995, researchers wishing to access to the Margaret Laurence fonds must sign the Access and Use Agreement form before access is granted.


FINDING AIDS: File and item lists available.

RELATED RECORDS See Fonds 401, Enid Rutland fonds; F432, Clara Thomas fonds; and F447, Adele Wiseman fonds.

ASSOCIATED RECORDS There are Margaret Laurence manuscripts at McMaster University Library.
Margaret Laurence fonds. - 1953-1987
- 12 m of textual records. 260 photographs and other graphic materials (posters, drawings, etc.). 35 sound recordings. 6 moving image recordings
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File and item lists available.

See Fonds 401, Enid Rutland fonds; F432, Clara Thomas fonds, and F447, Adele Wiseman fonds.

There are Margaret Laurence manuscripts at McMaster University Library.
Margaret Laurence fonds.


Physical Description: 12 m of textual records. - 250 photographs and other graphic materials (posters, drawings, etc.). - 35 sound recordings. - 6 moving image recordings.

Biographical History
Margaret Laurence (1926-1987), writer, was born in Neepawa, Manitoba and educated at United College in Winnipeg, Manitoba (BA 1947). Following her marriage to John Laurence (1947), she lived in Somaliland and the Gold Coast (now Ghana and Sierra Leone) in the 1950s. Laurence returned to Canada in 1957. She moved to England in 1962 and returned to Canada in 1969. In 1974 she settled in Lakefield, Ontario. Laurence served as a writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto in 1969 and was named chancellor of Trent University (Peterborough, Ontario) in 1981. Laurence was a founding member of the Writers Union of Canada, but left the organization in a dispute over its acceptance of money from the Canadian government. Active in peace organizations and intensely interested in women's concerns, Laurence's views and works did cause controversy. Her books drew criticism from certain elements in Laurence's adopted community. This group tried to have books removed from the school curriculum because of their alleged pornographic content. Margaret Laurence was the author of five novels, including the Manawaka quartet ("The stone angel," "A jest of God," "The diviners," "The dinners,"), short stories, essays, travel memoirs and children's books. She was named a Companion of the Order of Canada (1971) and was awarded the Molson Prize in 1975.

Scope and Contents
The fonds consists of the following series:
S1001 Correspondence, 1962-1987
S1002 Financial records, 1961-1988
S1003 Manuscripts, 1956-1988
S1009 Printed materials, 1963-1987
S1010 Personal files, 1956-1987
S1011 Graphic materials, 1956-1987
S1012 Sound recordings, 1974-1987
S1013 Moving image records, 1974-1987

Notes
Source of supplied title:
Title based on contents of the fonds.

Accessions:

Access Condition:
Effective January 1995, researchers wishing access to the Margaret Laurence fonds must sign the Access and Use Agreement granted.

Detailed Physical Description: 240 photographs and other graphic materials (posters, drawings, etc.), 35 sound recordings.
FONDS 341 SERIES 0 SUBSERIES 0
FONDS: MARGARET LAURENCE FONDS
EXTENT: 12 m of textual records and other material.
ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OR BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Margaret Laurence (1926-1987), writer, was born in Neepawa, Manitoba and educated at United College in Winnipeg, Manitoba (BA 1947). Following her marriage to John Laurence (1947), she lived in England in 1952 and returned to Canada in 1956. In 1974 she settled in Trent University (Peterborough, Ontario) in 1981. Laurence was a founding member of the Writers Union of Canada, but left the organization in a dispute over its acceptance of money from the Canadian government. Active in peace organizations and interested in women's concerns, Laurence's views and works did cause controversy. Her books drew criticism from certain elements in Lawrence's adopted community. This group tried to have books removed from the school curriculum because of their alleged pornographic content. Margaret Laurence was the author of five novels, including the Manawaka quartet ('The stone angel,' 'A jest of God,' 'The diviners,'), short stories, essays, travel and children's books. She was awarded the Molson Prize in 1975.


SEE FINDING AID NUMBER INDICATED FOR COMPLETE LISTING OF RECORDS; FILE and ITEM lists available.


RESTRICTIONS TO ACCESS: Access is unrestricted. Effective 1 January 1995, researchers wishing to access the Margaret Laurence fonds must sign the Access and Use Agreement form before access is granted.

DETAILED PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 260 photographs and other graphic materials (posters, drawings, etc.), 35 sound recordings, 6 moving image recordings.
Users' Opinions of Archival Display

Display 6

Screen 1

Fonds Description
F 1289
Margaret Laurence fonds

Dates of creation: 1953-1987
12 m. of textual records
260 photographs
3 drawings
35 audio reels
6 reels of motion picture film

Biographical Sketch
Margaret Laurence (1926-1987) was a Canadian writer of fiction who authored five novels.


Laurence served as the writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto in 1969 and was named chancellor of Trent University in 1981. Laurence was a founding member of the Writer's Union of Canada, but left the organization in a dispute over its acceptance of money from the Canadian Government.

Active in peace organizations and intensely interested in women's concerns, Laurence views and works caused controversy. Her books drew criticism from certain elements in Laurence's adopted community when a group attempted to have books removed from the school curriculum because of their alleged pornographic content.

Margaret Laurence's was the author of five novels, including the Manawaka quartet of novels ("The stone angel", "A jest of God," "The fire dwellers," and "The diviners"), short stories, essays, travel memoirs and children's books. She was named a Companion of the Order of Canada (1971) and was awarded the Molson Prize in 1975.

Screen 2

Interface Navigation by Grade-Six Students: A Case Study of Three Multimedia Products

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Reports research to investigate how two primary school students working in groups of two or three, interact with information from CD-ROM multimedia information products. The students demonstrated confusion when using interfaces, but did not find them equally easy or difficult to distinguish between the enjoyment of using a CD-ROM as a source of relevant information and the usefulness of the CD-ROM as a source of relevant information. The students were found to be effective in using the CD-ROM to solve their problems in devising effective retrieval strategies for browsing to searching strategies. Students were better at finding relevant information than at evaluating it. Features of the interface, no matter how powerful, if these were not accessible in the interface, textual information was valued for its logical coherence, its veracity, its organization, its tunable features or its soundness. Overall, students enjoyed using the CD-ROM, many asked when they would be able to repeat the experiment.

Introduction

The research investigated how grade-six students interact with CD-ROM multimedia information products in a class project on life in the Middle Ages. The study was designed to identify design criteria for such products and to investigate more general principles of new technologies into classroom teaching.