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Sustainable equals holistic - formal education for green archivists

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Hi, I'm Dr Louise Curham an academic in the School of Info and Comms Studies at CSU.

Here in Australia, we have a practice of acknowledging the cultural practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. That's really part of the daily practice in universities, less so in other places. So I want to acknowledge that I'm here on the lands of the Ngunawal people in Canberra and pay my respects to all First Nations peoples with us today.

What do I mean by a 'green archivist'. I mean an archivist who is aware of the environmental impact of their work, both positive impacts like making collections available that support climate and other actions and negative impacts, like energy intensive collections and energy intensive collecting practices.

Model for holistic sustainability



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2

Today I'm going to talk about a sketch for holistic sustainability that covers three dimensions. Here it's called a model, that's an ambitious word, a sketch is more accurate.

- My purpose is to share with you some very initial ideas about how I connect the emerging expectation from the profession and the public around sustainability. So this is a reflective talk, sharing my experience. I'm glad to have this opportunity because feedback between practitioners and educators is so important, and this is an emerging area in teaching in my School. So to share these early ideas with you is very valuable.
- In Australia, we're not yet at the point where cultural organisations are expected to account for their carbon footprint, but I see that it's coming. The ethics of our collections are facing scrutiny in other ways, eg decolonising collections and building culturally safe institutions were issues our professional associations here in Australia emphasised with our School recently. As we get closer to looking at the ethical dimension of every aspect of our supply chain, this closer look at our green credentials will come. I think of this as the social licence to operate. I am hearing this conversation from commentators like Take Down author Farah Nayeri who emphasises the ways we need to be answerable to our publics.

What's the background

Rapidly changing environment
2.0 is old, misinformation, Trump, data breaches

License to operate – process
matters

The environment is crowded
– who stewards information?

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3

To deliver meaningful green credentials, we need a deeper understanding of sustainability.

Why does it matter to us?

Archivists and records people deliver two things:

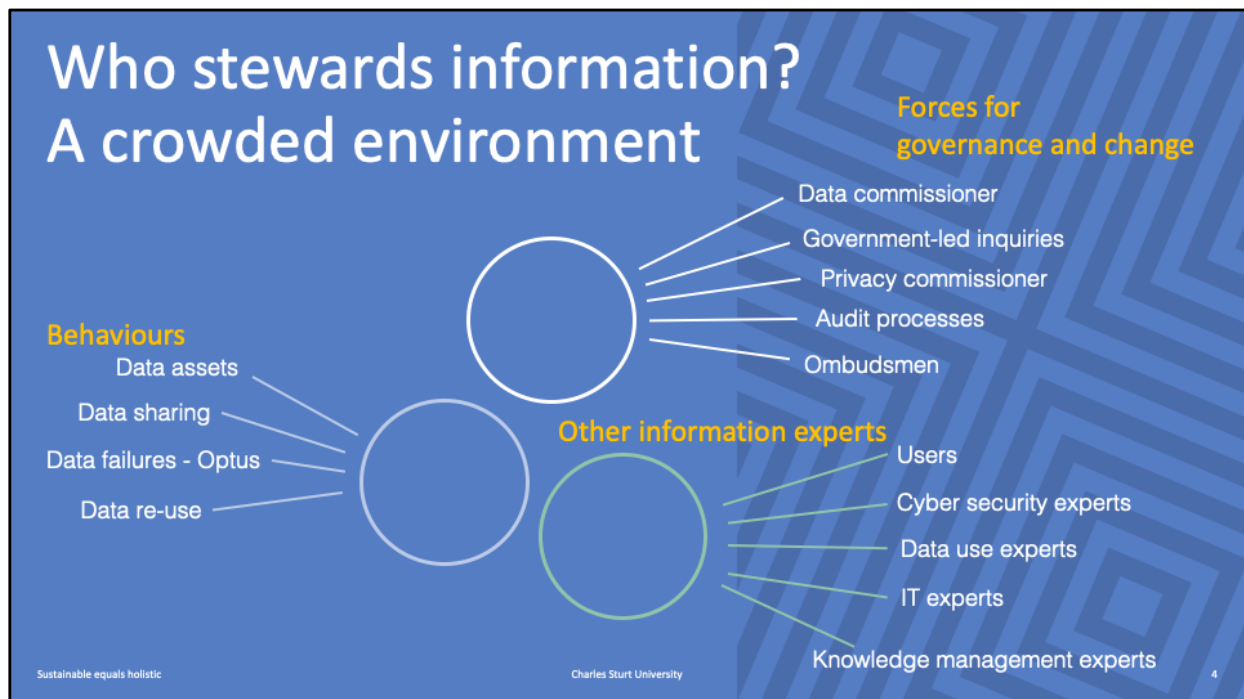
Trusted information that supports accountable and transparent society and
Social memory through documentary heritage – future archives

The impact of our work is reflected in:

- the value society places on trusted information
- Supported heritage institutions.

Green credentials deliver one part of the puzzle.

Who stewards information? A crowded environment



The information garden

We are not working in a vacuum.

Behaviours - what people want to do with information

Near neighbours – the other stewards

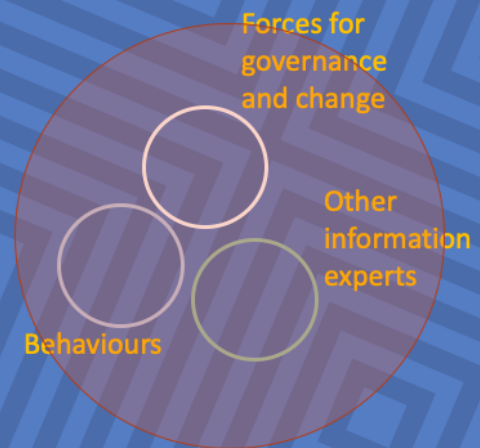
Forces that shape and change our behaviour

Who stewards information? A crowded environment

Records and archives people

Our contribution

- Archives = political
- Community archives = community wellbeing
- Promote trust by contributing to accountability through authentic and reliable records
- Contribute to society's memory



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5

The information garden

We are not working in a vacuum.

Behaviours - what people want to do with information

Near neighbours – the other stewards

Forces that shape and change our behaviour

We make a unique contribution in the information garden.

Archives are political. Why? Because they are tied to real world action and we select things so they express our values.

Archives express identity and thus contribute to self-expression and wellbeing.

What we offer:

Authentic and reliable records that promote trust and accountability

Contribution to society's memory

Archivists are the in-context, through time people, as NSW privacy expert Cassie Finlay says.

Continuing through time matters, this means we need a holistic understanding of sustainability.

Worldview

Archivists and records people:
the 'in context, through time' people

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6

Archivists are the in-context, through time people, as NSW privacy expert Cassie Finlay says. Continuing through time matters, this means we need a holistic understanding of sustainability.

Education for archives & records people: snapshot of CSU records subjects

The why

The what

The where

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7

What do I mean by records and archives people? We steward the active record for accountability and transparency and also for future heritage.

The why – Records archives and society

eg government and business
recordkeeping versus collecting
archives

The screenshot shows a course page for the Faculty of Arts and Education. The page title is 'Faculty of Arts and Education'. The course is 'S-INF529_202260_W_D (ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL RECORDS)'. The page is titled 'Home' and features a video introduction titled 'Organisational and Personal Records – Welcome' by Louise Curham. The video is powered by Panopto. Below the video, there is a section titled 'About this subject' which provides an overview of recordkeeping and archiving across a range of organisational contexts. The page also includes a sidebar with navigation links for Home, Getting started, Subject Outline, Evaluation, Learning Community, Academic Contacts, Announcements, Discussions, Online Meeting (Zoom), Recordings, Study groups, Assessment, A1 Essay, A2 Report on Funding opportunities, TURNITIN, EASTS, My Grades, Learning Content, Orientation module, Module 1: Standards and frameworks, and Module 2: Government records and the relationship.

Faculty of Arts and Education

S-INF529_202260_W_D
(ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL RECORDS)

Home
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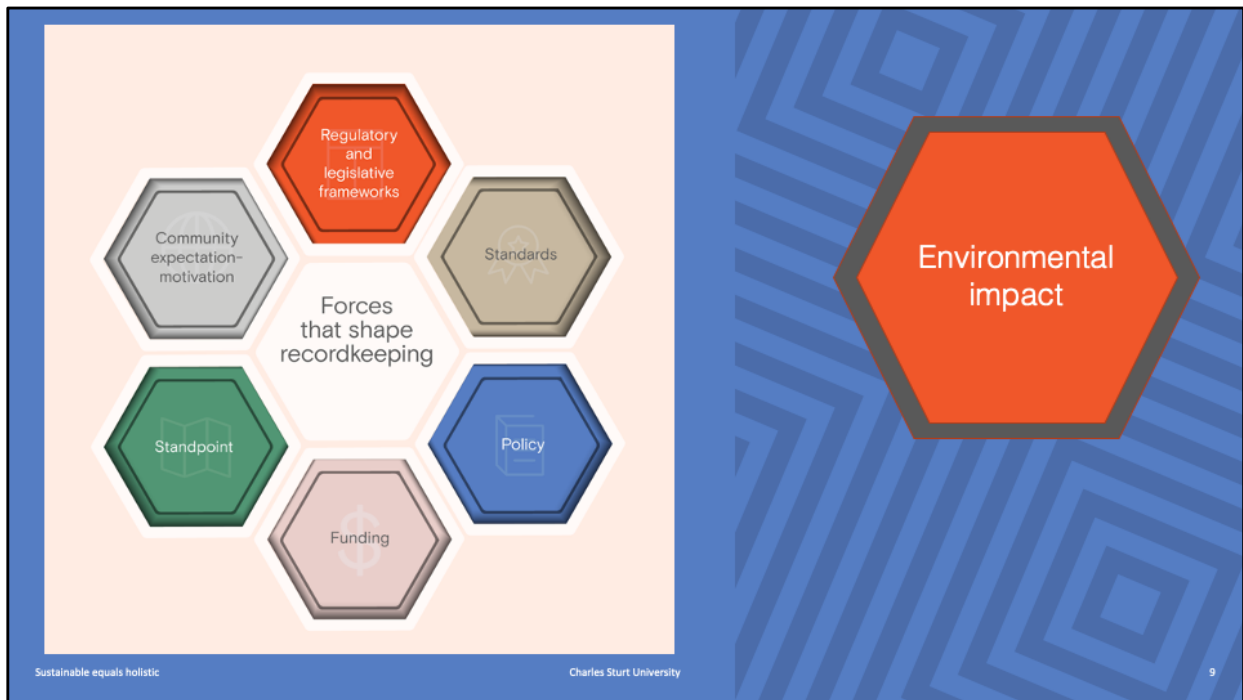
Learning Content
Orientation module
Module 1: Standards and frameworks
Module 2: Government records and the relationship

Welcome to INF529: Organisational and Personal Records

About this subject
This subject provides an overview of recordkeeping and archiving across a range of organisational contexts. It looks at how regulatory, policy and funding frameworks in different sectors affect recordkeeping, with a focus on how communities maintain their records. You will also explore keeping personal records and the issues involved when family records are donated to public collections. This subject will be a place where you can acquire new insights about the world of archives and records, share your understandings, and learn from each other.

Organisational and Personal Records – Welcome
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Powered by Panopto
Welcome to the subject, Louise Curham (2022) CSU School of Information and Communication

The forces that shape recordkeeping, that shape the records we make, how we care for them and how we bring them together.



The forces that shape recordkeeping, that shape the records we make, how we care for them and how we bring them together.

Model for holistic sustainability



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10

- So what does this diagram show? It shows that my thinking about sustainability connects three drivers – there's a rules dimension, that's governance. There's the 'how of caring' actually how we do things, and there's the reception, how is it received/perceived, that's the social impact angle.
- These three are informed by CSU's approach to sustainability: "a balancing act that requires people to consider how we share limited resources, balancing the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and balancing the economic, social, and environmental impacts of any decision" This statement borrows language from the United Nations (n.d.), World Commission on Environment and Development statement in their 'Our Common Future' document and refers to three areas of impact: **economic, social, and environmental**.
- Concretely how am I doing this? I have two subjects in which this is emerging, one a core subject about Collections, the other a records and archives elective.



Governance

- Funding
- Social mandate
- education



Preservation

- Practical measures to protect items
- Resource aware



Social impact

- License to operate
- Transparent processes



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Thank you

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