

# COMP A

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Articulate the ethics and values of archivists, records managers, and/or information professionals and discuss their role in social memory and organizational accountability.

### Interpretation

Every noble profession has a conversation about ethics. It's the element that takes up a significant part of our profession. Arguably, the event of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that monopolized the conversation was the Enron Scandal that took place in 2000-2003. The primary crime committed by the company was falsifying their numbers and lying to their stockholders. One of the ways they attempted to do so was through shredding a significant number of financial files through their accounting firm formally known as Arthur Andersen. It was considered one of the largest spoliations attempts of the century. This entire scandal provoked legislation to prevent this kind of scandal from happening again. The most notable one created in response was known as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act which essentially forced companies to have third-party auditors and financial analysts to examine a public company's financial records to protect shareholders from being scammed again.

Spoilation defined by the SAA is the "The intentional destruction, alteration, or concealment of evidence, especially documents." The mass shredding of financial documents before they can be seen is classified as such a thing. There had been no known retention policy in place at Enron. If they did have one, there was no way to tell if all of the documentation that was shredded had met its retention requirement. It is highly unlikely that they were paying attention to the age of the documentation and instead focused on shredding any document they could get their hands on.

There are significant benefits to having a retention policy available to prevent a company from becoming the next Enron. Having a layout of what information is expected to be deleted at a certain time period is significant to verifying your company's accountability. As archivists, we are taught to memorize the eight Generally Accepted Record keeping Principles from ARMA. They are accountability, transparency, integrity, protection, compliance, availability, retention, and the principle we have been talking about, disposition. If any organization wants to avoid sharing the same reputation as Enron did, they would be wise to follow these procedures. They violated their accountability by having their CEO oversee all the information management. They violated their transparency by keeping the information for themselves. They violated integrity by falsifying their financial records. They violated protection by using it too much and hiding the truth. They violated compliance so hard that the Sarbanes Oxley Act was made to prevent shareholders from being manipulated by a corporation again. They violated availability by retaining their assets primarily for themselves. They violated retention by ordering a mass document shredding way before it was time to do so. As long as you can follow these principles and study them to prevent this from happening again this century, your organization will not share infamy with this deceased company.

### Evidence

## MARA 283 Cloud Midterm Report

I did a report that emphasizes the severity of spoliation and how it can be significantly lethal to an organization if left unchecked. I covered three policies that talk about the different ways to combat spoliation. The three I mentioned were: the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the International Organization of Standards (ISO), and The National Archive of the United Kingdom. We are responsible as archivists to prevent information from being removed prematurely.

## MARA 284 Discussion 4

In this discussion I talked about the Nokia breach in 2007 which led to the loss of millions of dollars in revenue. The point of this discussion was talking about coming up with preemptive measures that could have prevented their software from being vulnerable. Unfortunately, the company had no measure in place because the technology compromised at the time was not advanced enough to have security measures in place. This was one of those scenarios where a company prevented a colossal spoilage attempt by paying the ransom instead and sparing their customers.

## MARA 210 Retention Assignment

To try and understand the motivation and need for having a retention schedule, I made one for my home. A significant amount of time in my future will be organizing my own home office. The COVID-19 pandemic has further verified the need to have a home office space as many future projects will probably take place at home. So, learning the process of retaining files at home was a significant exercise not only for my own environment, but a potential marketable skill that will become relevant as the profession grows. It also reveals the pressure of keeping an organized environment so that your company is not compromised.

## Conclusion

We are responsible as archivists to remind our organizations about the standards of recordkeeping policy. We must convince them to take the extra step in learning archival procedure and knowing the eight Generally Accepted Record keeping Principles GARP. The given principles are employed to protect organizations and their employees from external conflicts that would seek to cripple their integrity and significance. I will do my part to educate my superiors in the importance of maintaining ethical standards in Information Governance.

## References

ARMA. (2009). *The principles*. ARMA International. <https://www.arma.org/page/principles>

