THEFT IN ARCHIVES

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LIBER Collection
Security Conference

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THEFT IN ARCHIVES – A EUROPEAN PROJECT

2004: SURVEY ARCHIVES DE FRANCE
EBNA-MEETING THE HAGUE

2005: REPORT ON ARCHIVES
EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION OF 14-11-2005

ON PRIORITY ACTIONS TO INCREASE COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ARCHIVES IN EUROPE

RECOMMENDATION 5:
ADOPTION OF MEASURES TO PREVENT THE THEFT OF ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

Development of an action plan and common guidelines by the National Archives: exchange of information and best practices to combat theft and facilitate recovery of stolen documents
EBNA/EAG WORKING GROUP
2005-2008

SWEDEN (chair), ESTONIA, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS, POLAND, SPAIN, UNITED KINGDOM
RESULTS

2007: Report Stealing from archives

2008: Principles and practical guidance

2008: Declaration on the prevention of theft in archives and fight against their illegal trade
1. REPORT

- TO WHICH EXTENT IS THEFT A PROBLEM TO ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS?

- WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM?

- WHICH MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO DEAL WITH IT?
- QUESTIONNAIRE

- TO NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN 25 COUNTRIES
- FOR DISTRIBUTION TO NO MORE THAN 15 REPRESENTATIVE ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS

REPLIES RECEIVED
- 190 IN ALL; 96 DETAILED REPLIES
- REPORT: NUMBER OF THEFTS

THEFT PROBLEMS:
78 institutions (41%) of which 63 in the last 10 years
- CERTAIN THEFTS: 53 (28%) [90 c.]
- SUSPECTED THEFTS: 33 (17%) [75 c.]

But: ‘impossible to say, figures are kept for missing material but there are other explanations for why it is missing’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTOGRAPHS</td>
<td>(in 14 institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILATELIC MATERIAL</td>
<td>(in 11 institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAPS</td>
<td>(in 10 institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWNERSHIP TITLES</td>
<td>(in 9 institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENEEOLOGY</td>
<td>(in 3 institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEALS</td>
<td>(in 3 institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDRY</td>
<td>(in 33 institutions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- REPORT: DISCOVERY

- WHEN?  
  Within a month: 19 (12%)  
  Within a year: 41 (24%)  
  After more than a year: 48 (29%)  
  Not known: 37 (22%)  

- HOW?  
  Thief caught redhanded: 8 (9%)  
  Own staff / visitors: 47 (52%)  
  In connection with sale: 16 (18%)  
  External agent: 20 (22%)  
  Returned voluntary: 3 (6%)
- **REPORT: RECOVERY**

- **EXTENT?**
  - Returned: 36 (40%)
  - Partly returned: 14 (16%)
  - Not returned: 37 (41%)

- **HOW?**
  - Caught in the act: 5 (10%)
  - Institution staff: 15 (30%)
  - Police: 15 (30%)
  - At time of sale: 14 (28%)
- REPORT: THE THIEF

FULLY IDENTIFIED: 51 (57%)

26% robbed more than once in more than one institution

MOTIVES: money (80 out of 90 thefts)
* sell on the open market
* retain as investment
* blackmail
status
police reasons
behavioural disorder
- REPORT: THE THEFT

Theft most commonly takes place:

- DURING DAYTIME
FROM ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS’ READING ROOMS

OR

- BY STAFF WITH ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL STORAGE AREAS
- REPORT: SECURITY

MEASURES DIRECTED AT:

- THE PUBLIC  
  All institutions

- STAFF  
  54%
  *Limited access
  *Ban on dealing in archival documents
2. PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

PRINCIPLES:
- Risk Assessment and Loss Prevention Awareness
- Protection and Supervision
- Protection of Records by Security and Reading Room Staff
- Protection through Physical Security

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE
- On Rules and Procedures for Reading Rooms
3. DECLARATION

European symposium:
Roubaix 20-21 November 2008

A DECLARATION ON THE PREVENTION OF THEFT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST THEIR ILLEGAL TRADE

was adopted by Heads of the National Archives of 27 Member States
3. DECLARATION: RECOMMENDS

- MEASURES TO IMPROVE SECURITY OF ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

- MEASURES TO PROMOTE COOPERATION ON THE RESTITUTION OF STOLEN ARCHIVES
MORE INFORMATION

On the European Union and archival policy:
http://ec.europa.eu/archival-policy/eur_arch_group/index_en.htm

On measures to prevent theft:

Here can found the texts (in PDF format) of
- Report Theft in archives
- Principles and practical guidance
- Declaration on the prevention of theft in archives and fight against their illegal trade