



Research Article

ISSN : 0975-7384  
CODEN(USA) : JCPRC5

## Exploring open service mode of foreign university archives

Hongbo Tang

Huaihua College, Huaihua, Hunan, China

---

### ABSTRACT

Base on the various functions of archives to explain open service mode of foreign university archives. Learn experiences from archives of the United States and Britain, and summarize and analysis 5 foreign universities that publish archives open service. Then combine specific problems that open services of Chinese universities are currently facing and seek for possible solution.

**Key words:** archives function, open service mode of foreign universities, overseas, problems

---

### INTRODUCTION

'The demos can be employed but not be informed with rudders.' This timeworn idea has played a long lasting impact on the governments world-wide so that they tend to control archives and keep them close to the public. In such circumstances, archive has become an unsearchable resource and most of the people have never stepped into an archive in their life. In the 19th century, archival scientist proposed to open archives but failed due to various political and cultural restrictions. It leaves the archives covered under mystery and dust. Finally, with improved social progress and political openness over time, some governments attempted to open their archives and exhibited historical archives in order to keep the history in people's mind. Step by step, archives became open to the public and the public perception of archive had changed. Archive, the spectator of history, has been developing progressively and helped the public review the past.

University is a place of higher education. With their profound impact on the regional or national politics, economics, and culture, their archives of regional or national economics, history, and activity inventory of teachers and students are of importance.

### 2 BASIC FUNCTIONS OF ARCHIVES

Understanding basic functions of archives is fundamental to investigate the open services of foreign archives. It not only helps analyze the pros and cons of open services by its nature but inspires ideas to keep the documents safe.

#### 2.1 Function of safekeeping

Archives are administrative organizations that keep various historic resources and national documents. Their core function is to preserve historic documents and materials. These materials help researchers investigate the history and build up sophisticated historical system and remind the people of history. Multiple cultures and spirits vanished with time. Reminding people of the past indicates the importance of archive's existence.

#### 2.2 Function of investigation

Archives, which preserve historic documents, have a function of supporting study of history. Since the naissance of archives, they took the responsibility of helping amend the history based on historical documents and preserve it. In addition to preservation, archives also did investigation on history and culture based on the existing documents. The development of archives is a history of amending, investigating and preserving documents.

### 2.3 Function of information dissemination

In the view of informatics, archives are giant centers that keep various historic documents and information within archives will be classified as retrospective information. Sufficiently investigate these historic documents then obtain effective and creditable information is the function of archives. In that case, the challenging part will be on information dissemination, so the publics will have chance to understand, to learn and to remember the history. However, with the influences of political factors, great amount of archives are no long capable for information dissemination and only remain the function of safekeeping.

### 2.4 Function of social education

Archives process not only historic documents but also educative information. As a part of social education, archives are responsible to perform their duties on education toward publics. Documents preserved by archives are originally recorded, and will have possibility to contain politic ideas. These ideas will be essential for this society. Because of that, utilize historic documents preserved by archives will be a crucial part to make positive efforts on social education.

### 2.5 Function of management and supervise

Among the documents preserved by archives, some of them contain the power to produce enormously impacts on this society for evaluation and analysis of this current society in the future. It indicates that fact that archives is not only a place to keep various historic documents, but also a place where the history could be judged. Because of that, the existence of archives could regard as a function to supervise the past history and also this society we currently living in.

## 3 ARCHIVES OPEN SERVICE MODE OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

### 3.1 Universities of the United States

In present days, the archives open service mode among the universities of the United States has stepped into a relatively mature stage. Because in the United States, the archives open service is highly valued by this country, and as a part of social life, archives of university ought to maintain open and serve the society. It is just like the relationship between university instructors and their students. In the United States, archives inside general public universities are open to the publics, some of the secondary or elementary school archives may do the same. In this way, the publics can access to archives whenever they needed and without any identification. Nevertheless, some private schools still choose to privately open its archives only for their belonging faculties and students. As the process of archives open service mode moving forward, private schools gradually aware the importance of open their archives, for the development progress of school and its region area are tightly combined together. Open up archives can be regarded as an effective way to provide social services and universities are responsible for making contribution toward their regional area. A majority of the United States universities open their archives to public for free but few others may require an additional certification. This archives open service mode among universities of United States will benefit the publics by vary their reading experiences and fulfill their reading demands. Besides, those resources sealed by history will once again obtain their opportunity to achieve their value.

### 3.2 British Universities

Archives in British universities have the longest history of opening to the public. For most universities, their archives are open to the public since they were founded. The original purpose is to make graduates remember the university they graduated from and why they went to the university so that they can make contributions to their universities and help raise the fund for research and development. Graduates, companies and organizations as well as students can register to have a libraries card, but how long one can keep the books are different. In this way, the archives can be fully used and culture can be passed on from generation to generation. British universities have the best archives all over the world and their archives have complete systems for opening to the public.

### 3.3 Universities in Other Countries

Apart from the US and Britain, universities in many other countries also have the open services of archives. It is a great progress also there are still limitations in the open services. Australia, Sweden and Finland etc. have the open services of archives. In Australia, archives are open to the public but only students are able to borrow archives. In Sweden, archives of many universities are also open to the public and people don't have to have a library card to get the access. The open services of archives facilitate world cultural and historic exchange, make our lives convenient and pass the historic spirits on and on.

## 4 OPEN SERVICE MODE OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES: COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

More and more universities have the open services of archives, which gives a good example for universities in our countries. The following picture is the comparison and contrast of the mode of open service between five foreign universities (see Figure 1).

The famous foreign university archives opening			
Serial number	Archives name	The public development	The object of opening to the outside world
1	USA Yale University archives	Archives are open to the public every day before six p.m.	Other college students; individual researchers non relationship
2	USA Stanford University archives	Archives are open to the public; the number of visits and Power Co.	Alumni; other school teachers and students; independent scholars
3	USA Columbia University archives	Archives are open to the public; to produce the relevant documents	Alumni Association; the public;
4	USA University of California at Berkeley archives	Archives are open to the public free reading material;	Alumni; tourists; scholars
5	British University of Oxford archives	Archives are open to the public; a tour guide	Alumni; scholars; more than 65 years without occupation personnel

Figure 1

The following graph shows the patterns of open service in our country (see Figure 2)

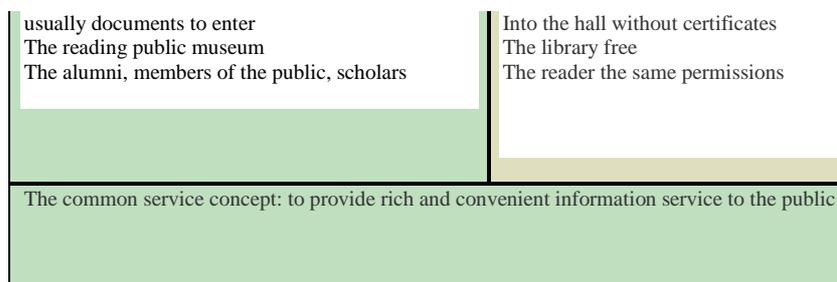


Figure 2

## 5 LEARNING FROM THE FOREIGN MODE OF OPEN SERVICE

### 5.1 The Extent to the Open Service

Chinese archives contain many confidential materials and it is critically difficult to decide which can be open to the public. Universities have significant influence on the politics and economy of the regions they belong, and their archives may contain materials concerning sensitive politics topics. Although the impact of opening certain materials to the public will be insignificant after long, these materials are still confidential now. So universities should protect confidential materials and only make historic archives accessible. Also, universities should put emphasis on the public's right to privacy.

### 5.2 The Problem of Intellectual Property

In today's world, once archives are open to the public, it is extremely hard to control how these archives will be used. Some of them will be publicized on the internet and shared by everybody. Foreseeably, individual's intellectual right to property will be badly violated because everyone can view, copy, share and use these archives online. So it's important to protect scholars' intellectual property right while opening the archives to the public.

It is not a violation of law when archives are collected, but when they are accessible to the public it violates scholars' intellectual right of property. When archives are open to the public, we should remind users of the illegitimate usage and make agreement with interest groups and individual.

The open service of archives satisfies people's need for information and the need of this age. This article gives a good example for the open services of Chinese universities by comparing the open service mode of foreign universities. But apart from learning from foreign countries, we should take our situations into consideration when we adopt the open service of archives. Now we still face many problems concerning the open service and only when we solve these problems can we adopt the open service of archives. So we welcome further studies in the problems of the open services of archives.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Xia Dawei. "Public mode" external flow pattern design of public comprehensive archives [J]. *Zhonghua Minju*, 2012(06).
- [2] Wang Gaijiao. A New Concept of Document Filing [J]. *Archives Of Shanxi*, 2011(05).
- [3] Zhou Meilan; Chen Ronghui. Optimizing the Collected Archives Structure and Building a Model of Open

Service. [J]. *Journal Of Xiangtan Normal University(Social Science Edition)*, **2003**(05).

[4] OUYANG Hui-fang. The Integrative Construction of Archives and the Academia Historical Museum in Colleges and Universities [J]. *Journal of South China University of Technology (Social Science Edition)*, **2014**(02).

[5] He Jiang. On Open Trend of Modern Archives in China [J]. *Journal Of Library And Information Sciences In Agriculture*, **2009**(09).

[6] Zhang Linfang; Wu Zhipeng. Transparency of the government authority in the construction of archives opening to the outside world service research [J]. *Archives Science Bulletin*, **2012**(03).