

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE METRO TRANSPORTATION LIBRARY &amp; ARCHIVE: “BETTER THAN FREE” GENERATIVE VALUES</b></p>
--

Our Digital Strategy identifies eight generative values that play a significant role in driving our efforts in collecting, preserving, presenting, and sharing the rich content of Metro’s Dorothy Peyton Gray Library & Archive collections.

Data and information available on the Internet has changed the way we live, work, and entertain ourselves. Some may think that the proliferation of free and easily accessible resources have rendered libraries, librarians, and information professionals no longer necessary.

That sentiment makes as much sense as arguing that since everyone now has access to driving and roadways, we no longer need maps or informational tools to find the fastest, most reliable route.

Free information is a wonderful thing, but the Library & Archive embraces eight key values that greatly enhance the information-seeking experience of our users. These “better than free generatives” allow us to contribute vital value-added services for our employees, the public, and other research institutions.

They are: **immediacy, personalization, interpretation, authenticity, accessibility, findability, embodiment and patronage.**

### **IMMEDIACY**

Sooner or later, many information seekers may find what they want, but getting a copy delivered to their email inbox the moment it is released (or better yet, produced) by its creators is an incredible asset. We live in an “expectation economy,” and while some may feel overwhelmed with what we need to learn to keep up, the Library and Archive embodies several time-sensitive values: serving users efficiently, engaging our users and communities, and anticipating needs rather than reacting to them.

### **PERSONALIZATION**

Free information comes in the form you find it, but the Library & Archive can customize information delivery tailored to the needs and proficiency of the user. Personalization requires an ongoing conversation between the creator and the consumer, producer and user, distributor and fan. While the Internet may function as a giant copying and distribution machine, you can’t copy the personalization that a relationship represents. In marketing terms, both sides of the relationship are invested in this asset and our relationships grow stronger as both the Library and Archive as well as our users evolve.

## **INTERPRETATION**

As the old joke goes, the software is free, but the manual costs \$10,000. Providing information in today's world of information glut is not nearly enough. Easy access to all of human knowledge has become just as confounding as limited or no access. The Library and Archives adds the priceless yet "free" benefits of subject expertise, evaluation, and context to information provided to users.

## **AUTHENTICITY**

The ability to edit or change various digital media brings peril to any information provider's claim of providing original, unaltered information. Authenticity goes hand in hand with accuracy. The Library and Archive's commitment to accuracy lends significant value to providing authentic print and visual resources related to our mission. Free information is great, but when it comes from a trusted source, it's even more valuable: You can't put a price on piece of mind.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Information seekers have increasing demands, but ownership and upkeep of resources are not among them. Possessing information requires organization, keeping things current, security, and in our increasingly mobile world, portability. The Library and Archive constantly strives for new and improved methods of access for its unique and valued resources. Our users can take in what they need via computer, smart phone, or in the Library and Archive itself. As time goes on, the demand for everywhere, "24/7" information access will continue to grow parallel to the desire for the Library and Archive to collect, preserve, and present relevant materials for our users. Mobile devices will be the primary connection tool to the internet for most people in the world in 2020.

## **FINDABILITY**

Providing access is one thing, but findability is something altogether different. Information resources have no value unless they are findable. In the increasingly crowded information marketplace, getting information into the hands of those searching as well as those who would find value in discovering it is critical. The Library & Archive continues to render works discoverable through appropriate and consistent methods including cataloging, keyword tagging, aggregating similar works from other sources, and channeling attention to new and timely resources. While these resources are free, their value increases exponentially once we get them into the hands of those who need them.

## **EMBODIMENT**

Keeping and maintaining original items in our collections is just as important as the continuous improvements in access to them, new versions, mash-ups with other data, or enhanced copies. Our historic photographs and manuscripts are irreplaceable primary resources valued by researchers and subject specialists worldwide. The Library & Archive values its professional commitment to the

proper preservation and storage of original works, especially when one considers that no “permanent” preservation method is the ultimate media storage solution.

## **PATRONAGE**

The Library & Archive provides many free services to Metro employees, the public, and other institutions. The only thing better than free service is the ongoing patronage of our consumers who keep coming back, refer us to their colleagues, and use word-of-mouth and viral marketing techniques that money can't buy. Providing excellent products and services makes this easy and pleasurable for them, the payoff is priceless, and magnifies the importance of the other generative values already mentioned.

Maximizing our return on these eight qualities requires a flexible skill set for our Library & Archive employees. We value our traditional products and services while we learn about and provide new ones.

New skills are adopted, new media are assessed, and new questions of ownership, intellectual property and copyright are constantly being raised.

**One thing is irrefutable: these eight generative qualities demand an understanding of providing information resources in new ways as a sharing and collaborative mindset. It is vital to our mission to cultivate and nurture the qualities of service that can not be replicated with the turn of a page or a click of the mouse.**