

# **An Engineer's Perspective on Space History and Archiving\***

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Key decision makers in government and industry that value the insight of space historians can be of assistance when dealing with complex issues and processes that restrict access to flight program personnel and primary source material. A positive view of historical efforts can be cultivated through several activities. Key decision makers could be introduced to historical works that detail program management topics such as leadership, policy, legislative affairs, business strategies, commercial and government partnerships, fostering cultures of innovation, and the organizational and cultural problems that led to spacecraft mishaps. Professional historians and archivists can use their research and communication skills to help government and commercial organizations address knowledge management issues. Examples include mentoring subject matter experts to perform technically oriented oral history or to research and write vehicle engineering history. Spaceflight program personnel could be encouraged and equipped by historians and archivists to preserve and share their experiences using a variety of media, if it is legally permissible to do so. Professional engineering organizations can assist budget constrained professional historians and archivists by organizing the efforts of flight program personnel working on personal time. Key personnel could be interviewed for oral history soon after an important event when memories are fresh, rather than waiting until they are in late career or retirement.

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