

# **(Re)Understanding Progress as Process? Appraising the Contemporary Records of Science and Technology in the 21st Century**

Bethany Anderson, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In 2013, science writer Georgina Ferry published an editorial in *Nature* “Scientific Heritage: Science today, history tomorrow” lamenting, “how fragile a trace modern science is leaving in the historical record.” This concern that contemporary science and technology is not being adequately captured in the historical record largely stems from a combination of the overwhelming body of born-digital records created today as standard means for communication and recording and manipulating massive data sets, scientists’ undervaluation of the archival value of their own records, and a level of uncertainty on the part of archivists about how to select and appraise scientific records and processes. From the perspective of collecting and appraising science and technology in a university archives, this paper looks back on postwar initiatives to develop appraisal strategies for science and technology and reevaluates those recommendations in light of the technological turn as we race to preserve the history of aerospace engineering and more than a trace of today's technological efforts and achievements.