

You've got a Better Chance of Finding Waldo: Archivists in Pop Culture and Why their Lack of Visibility Matters

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Abstract: I'm sure you can recall that awkward moment when you have struggled to figure out a way to quickly explain your job to a family member, friend, supervisor, or complete stranger. Hard, right? Do you know who doesn't have it hard? Doctors, teachers, lawyers, and astronauts to name a few, and that may have something to do with the fact that those professions are featured prominently in sitcoms, dramas, and major motion pictures. In recent years, archives and archivists have gotten some exposure, but the profession has yet to break into today's pop culture zeitgeist. Breaking into pop culture is important because it increases archivists' exposure to the public. This exposure is essential for advocacy purposes. Whether it's to raise awareness, court donors, or fight the ever-looming budget cut, a public that is aware and supportive of what archives are and what archivists do from the get-go is going to be mobilized faster than a public that needs to be won over first. In this presentation, I'll look at when and how archivists are depicted in pop culture and speculate on how we can increase our exposure.

About the author:

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