

# **“Life is Too Short Not to Speak the Truth”: Framing Accountable Community Collaboration Within HIV/AIDS Archival Work**

Travis Wagner<sup>a</sup>, Allan Martell<sup>b</sup>, Shannon Oltmann<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA

<sup>b</sup>Indiana University, USA

<sup>c</sup>University of Kentucky, USA

[wagnert@illinois.edu](mailto:wagnert@illinois.edu), [allmarte@iu.edu](mailto:allmarte@iu.edu), [shannon.oltmann@uky.edu](mailto:shannon.oltmann@uky.edu)

## **ABSTRACT**

This poster shares findings from semi-structured interviews with 25 archivists and curators working with LGBTQIA+ archival materials and collections within institutional and community settings. Focusing specifically on collections that include HIV/AIDS-related material, this project explores how practitioners build, curate, and sustain these collections against the backdrop of the epidemic’s memory and the ongoing realities of the virus within culture. This poster reports directly on findings related to the role of community accountability within the work of these practitioners. The poster identifies how such work informs and is informed by questions of archival ethics, embodied identity, and notions of evidence and truth relating to archival documentation. The poster highlights how practitioners understand the care and consideration it takes to build meaningful relationships with LGBTQIA+ community partners and how such actions can conflict with the traditional methods of archival facilitation. Example conflicts relate to questions of institutional production metrics, extraction-based preservation, and objectivist orientations to describe and access those identities within the collection. The poster provides practical and theoretical interventions for archivists working with or planning to work with LGBTQIA+ communities to ensure more accountable work. It emphasizes how event-based framing, such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, can advance and hinder this endeavor. The poster highlights potential areas for further exploration related to other historically marginalized populations within archives whose presence in archival collections might benefit from community collaboration in nuancing archival work around such moments.

## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Archives; Specific populations; Community engagement; Social justice; Critical librarianship.

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

LGBTQIA+ communities; Queer archives; HIV/AIDS; Qualitative methods; Embodied knowledge.

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DOI: [https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2024.\[submission\\_id\]](https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2024.[submission_id])