# The Declassification Initiative at Library and Archives Canada (LAC)

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**Deputy Director** 

**Declassification** 

DISCOVER. UNDERSTAND. CONNECT.





# Basics of the developed approach

## 1. Principle of creator authority

- Only the creator of the classified document / information has the authority to declassify it.
  - Consequence:
    - LAC must contact the creating departments to obtain their authorization to declassify.

## 2. Principle of decreasing sensitivity

- With the passage of time, the sensitivity of classified information decreases.
- Reflected by the concept of sunset clauses.

## **Definitions**

## Classified

- Document / information whose unauthorized disclosure could cause injury to the national interest
- CONFIDENTIAL injury to the national interest
- **SECRET** serious injury to the national interest
- TOP SECRET exceptionally grave injury to the national interest

## **Declassify**

 Cancel / decrease the security classification of a classified document / information

## **Equity**

 Authority to declassify shared by another creating department

## Overview of classified documents at LAC

Approximately 3,000 boxes containing Top Secret documents • (a box contains 2 to 20 records...) Countless (literally) Secret and Confidential records Incomplete finding aids (transfer lists) • Some illustrative examples

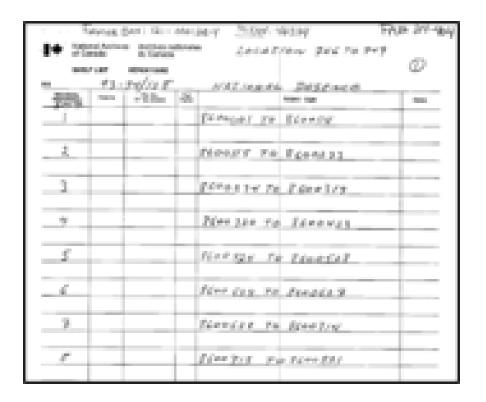
# Examples of old finding aids

#### No title

SAMPLE #1  CA/SR MEANS HISTORICAL RECORD  CA/SR MEANS HISTORICAL RECORD							
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Old transfer lists rarely contain the classification level of records.

#### No title / date



# Why declassify

# Improve access to Government of Canada documents

### **Impact on LAC:**

- specialized storage (\$\$\$)
- specialized IT network
- longer process (specialized circulation of documents)
- longer ATIP process (requires trained employees and secure networks)



# Methodology







ANALYZE CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS



PRODUCE THE
DECLASSIFICATION
REPORT FOR THE
CREATING DEPARTMENT

# Submissions to departments

#### Includes three documents:

1

# **Declassification** application form

Document constituting the official application for declassification, with signatures

2.

#### Appendix A: Analysis report

Summary explaining all documents and why they can be declassified or downgraded

3.

## Appendix B: List of analyzed records/documents

Detailed list of analyzed documents submitted to the department for declassification

## Challenges faced



Finding classified material in LAC collections



Finding the right contact within the creating department

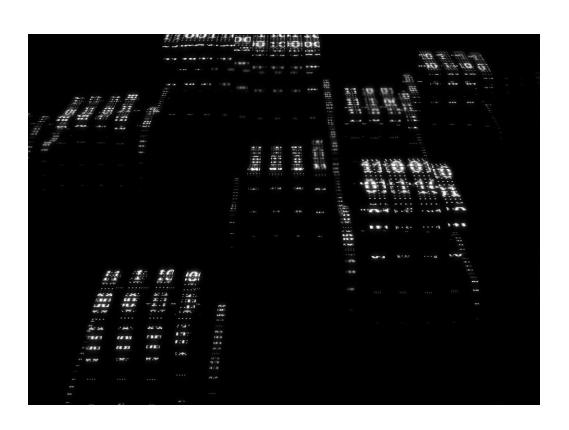


Being patient



Being patient

## Results



#### FY 2023-2024

- Number of reviewed pages: 179,514
- Number of pages submitted: 101,851
- Number of declassified pages: 18,165

#### FY 2024-2025

- Number of reviewed pages: 332,058
- Number of pages submitted: 114,621
- Number of declassified pages: 45,241

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