



Jet Propulsion Laboratory  
California Institute of Technology



# JPL Archives and Records Overview

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# JPL Archives Mission

- To document the history of JPL's flight projects, research and development activities, and administrative operations from the Laboratory's beginnings in the late 1930s to the present
- To identify Laboratory records of historical value, collect and preserve those records, and make them available for a variety of research uses by JPL and NASA personnel, contractors, and the general public

# Chief Archivist's Role

- Interfaces:
  - NASA Records Officer
  - NASA Management Office
  - NASA History Office/NASA History Advisory Committee as History Point of Contact
  - NARA
- Ensure compliance with Prime Contract on records requirements
- Records Manager
- Contract Technical Manager: JPL Archives/Records Management Services Contract



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# Creating the JPL Archives

- 1<sup>st</sup> Archivist hired in 1989 as a result of an outside consultant's review and recommendation
- Formally established in 1989
- Leased facility in Pasadena
- Managed and operated by JPL until September 1998
- Sherikon Space Systems/Anteon Corp. operated since September 1998



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# Holdings

- Processed collections
- History Collection
- Microfilm collection
- Still and moving images
- Oral history tapes and transcripts



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# Services

- In-depth historical research assistance
- Appraisal of records for historical value
- Records management filing system and records retention schedules consultation

# Getting the Word Out

- BEACON web site: JPL History
  - Historical Photo of the Month (since 1996)
  - JPL Timeline
  - Exhibits:
    - Faces of Leadership: the Directors of JPL
    - Historical Images of Voyager's Grand Tour
- Presentations and articles
- Policy and Procedure in JPL Rules!
- Records Management Improvement Initiative

# Challenges

- Government ownership of records
- Freezes on destruction of records
- ISO records as subset of records
- Electronic records retention and access
- Multiple repositories –  
EDS/Archives/PDMS/DocuShare
- Staff time in appraising records at end of project/life-cycle
- New Prime Contract requirements
- Matching Archives and Project requirements

# Strategic Direction

- Emphasize records management at time of creation – develop consistent organization & strong relationships with Project Librarians
- Work with repositories to ensure archiving
- Transfer paper collections to NARA – project records are government records
- Partnership with Knowledge Management
  - Institutional Catalog
  - Electronic Archives