



The New York Public Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

**New York Times Company records. John Rothman papers**

1959-1990

MssCol 22561

Compiled by Philip Heslip, 2013. Additional edits made by William Stingone, 2016.

## Summary

**Creator:** New York Times Company

**Title:** New York Times Company records. John Rothman papers

**Date:** 1959-1990

**Size:** .84 linear feet (2 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by The New York Times Company, 2007.

**Abstract:** John Rothman (born 1924) was The New York Times director of corporate archives and a longtime information manager and pioneer of digital indexing at The Times. The John Rothman papers (1964-1990) consist of memoranda and reports documenting Rothman's leadership role in the development of The New York Times Information Bank and other information technologies. Also present are Rothman's speeches and writings on copyright, information management, and technological changes in the field of information processing and retrieval.

**Access:** Advance notice required.

### Conditions Governing Access:

Sound recordings are unavailable for use pending preservation transfer.

**Conditions Governing Use:** Copyright for documents created by New York Times Company principals and staff has been transferred to The New York Public Library.

**Preferred citation:** New York Times Company records. John Rothman papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

**Processing note:** Compiled by Philip Heslip, 2013. Additional edits made by William Stingone, 2016.

### Related Materials:

Forms part of New York Times Company records.

## Creator History

John Rothman (born 1924) was the director of The New York Times' corporate archives and a longtime information manager at The Times.

Rothman joined the paper in 1946 as an indexer at The New York Times Index. He became the assistant editor of the Times Index in 1950 and the editor of the Index in 1964. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Rothman developed plans for an electronic version of the Index. Upon becoming the Times Director of Information Services in 1967, Rothman created the Information Bank, which was first offered to commercial, government, and foundation subscribers in 1972. In 1975, Rothman was named Director of the New York Times Research & Information Technology. In this role, he advised on the company's use of computer technologies; oversaw the paper's Reference Library, Photo Library; and developed the News Research Section. Finally, Rothman served as the director of the New York Times Archives from 1981 to 1990. After leaving the paper, Rothman worked as an archives consultant and as a volunteer archivist for the CUNY Graduate Center Archives. Throughout his career, Rothman published and lectured on technology's role in information delivery, copyright law, reference services, and preservation of and access to information.

## Scope and Content Note

The John Rothman papers (1964-1990) contain records from Rothman's tenure as The New York Times director of Information Services (1967-1975), director of Research and Information Technology (1975-1981), and director of Archives (1981-1990). The papers consist of memoranda and reports documenting Rothman's leadership role the development of The New York Times Information Bank, other information technologies, and the archives. Of note are the monthly reports that summarize Rothman's activities as Director of Research and Information Technology (1975-1981). The collection features articles about Rothman's activities at The Times, and photographs of Rothman.

Also present are Rothman's speeches and writings on copyright, information management, and technological changes in the field of information science. These speeches and writings files include some background articles and speeches by others that Rothman drew on for his research. This section also consists of slides depicting Information Bank hardware and screenshots of Information Bank queries; an audio recording of a talk Roth gave at the 1977 Information Industry Association conference, "Behind the Scenes in the Information Industry: Who? Why? How?"; and a video of Rothman and Congressman Charles G. Rose discussing The Times Information Bank in 1974.

**Arrangement:** This collection is arranged alphabetically by file title.

## Key Terms

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Audiocassettes  
Memorandums  
Photographs  
Slides (photographs)  
Videocassettes

**Subjects**

Information science

Newspapers -- Abstracting and indexing

**Names**

Rothman, John, 1924-

New York Times Information Bank (Firm)

New York Times Information Service

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Biography 1964-1989
- b. 1 f. 2 Correspondence 1968-1977
- b. 1 f. 3 Indexing Standard (American National Standards Institute) 1959-1975
- b. 1 f. 4 Information Industry Association 1968-1982
- b. 1 f. 5 Japan Trips 1979-1980
- b. 1 f. 6 Monthly Reports: Director of Research and Information Technology 1975-1981
- b. 1 f. 7 *Our Own Bartlett's--Quotation Booklet Draft* 1989
- b. 1 f. 8 Photographs of Rothman 1966-1981
- b. 1 f. 9 Privacy and Technology Memoranda 1974-1977
- b. 1 f. 10 Speeches and Writings 1966-1990
- b. 2 f. 1-6 Speeches and Writings 1966-1990