

Activity Report
ACRL Digital Scholarship Section
Digital Collections Discussion Group
July 2020-June 2021

Ashley Sergiadis and Nashieli Marcano organized the following activities for the 2020-2021 term.

July 2020-June 2021: Monitored the DSS DC DG listserv (Sympa) and ALA Connect. ACRL migrated communication to discussion groups from Sympa to ALA Connect. As of June 1, 2021, there are 242 subscribers in the Sympa DSS DC DG listerv. 24 people subscribed between July 2020-June 2021. As of June 1, 2021, there are 40 members in the DSS DC DG ALA Connect. 23 were added between July 2020-June 2021.

July 2020: Distributed a survey to discover the topics and type of format that members of the DSS DC DG Sympa listserv preferred for future meetings. The survey informed the creation of the Lightning Talk Series. Survey results provided in Appendix A.

September-October 2020: Distributed a Call for Proposals through the DSS DC DG Sympa listserv and the Digital Commons Google Group for the Lightning Talk Series on Digital Collections in Teaching and Research.

December 2020-January 2021: Reviewed proposals received for the Lightning Talk Series. Scheduled three sessions in March, April, and May through ACRL Zoom.

February 2021: Advertised Lightning Talk Series in ALA Connect (DSS and DSS DC DG), Sympa listserv (DSS and DSS DC DG), Digital Commons Google Group, MLA Humanities Commons, and LinkedIn. Reminders were sent the Monday before each session through ALA Connect (DSS and DSS DC DG). Flyer and abstracts provided in Appendix C.

March-May 2021: Hosted three sessions for the Lightning Talk Series. Practice sessions were scheduled before each lightning talk. Slides by presenters and chat transcript were added to ALA Connect and recording of session was added to the ACRL YouTube channel. More information (registration, attendance, links to recording, slides, and chat transcript) on the individual lightning talk sessions are available in Appendix B.

Appendix A: Survey on Future Meetings

What topic(s) would be the most beneficial to you?

- Writing grants for digital collections, formatting digital collections for better access for distance learners, creating a digital collection during COVID to better reflect the community, making more digital collections diverse and bold without offending, etc.
- Using existing digital collections to provide remote work for those internal and those external to the digital collections department. Examples about the best ways to crowdsource transcriptions would be great!
- I'm really interested in doing digital scholarship with collections. I've been involved in many digitization grants and DH grants, but I want to transition into making scholarship and research activity more central to digitization work at our institution.
- instruction and outreach with digital collections, grants, assessing engagement with digital collections
- writing grants for digital collections, doing scholarship with digital collections, working with open access tools, advocating for staff to do the work
- Making digital collections more accessible for disabled * standards and best practices * staffing * strategies for engaging audiences * statistics * including metadata in different aggregations for increased discovery; e.g., DPLA, ARL SHARE * data repositories * theses and dissertations - practices and issues * copyright and rights
- Building a development policy for digital collections, which emphasizes access, diversity and inclusion. (Share your experiences and resources.) - Assigning rights statements to digital collections. - Tools and procedures for reviewing PII in digital collections. - Recommendations for transcription projects (instruction, software and workflows) - Sun setting digital collections and/or restructuring digital collections for the future. - Also, I would love to hear more about grant writing for digital collections.
- scholarship with digital collections, promoting digital collections to researchers, connecting digital collections to class projects

What format would be the most beneficial to you?

2 – Facilitated Discussion

1 – Long Presentation

3 – Short Presentation

2 – Other (1- ALCTS e-forums - 2-day email exchanges - work well. Each has 2-3 facilitators that present a series of questions. Participation is usually good. 2 - I could see having a combination of all three, but if I had to rank them I would order my preference as short, fac disc, and long.)

Appendix B: Results from the Lightning Talk Series

Collaborating on Digital Collections in Teaching and Research

March 26, 2021

Registration: 155

Attendance: 73

Recording: <https://youtu.be/f02yED9DLqs>

Slides and Chat Transcript: <https://connect.ala.org/acrl/viewdocument/presentation-slides-collaborating>

Enhancing Digital Collections in Teaching and Research with Digital Tools

April 23, 2021

Registration: 176

Attendance: 77

Recording: <https://youtu.be/yrqevkJY314>

Slides and Chat Transcript: <https://connect.ala.org/acrl/viewdocument/presentation-slides-chat-transcri>

Highlighting a Specific Digital Collection in Teaching and Research

May 28, 2021

Registration: 144

Attendance: 54

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VfOK8KJPwk>

Slides and Chat Transcript: <https://connect.ala.org/acrl/viewdocument/presentation-slides-chat-transcri>

ACRL Digital Scholarship Section
Digital Collections Discussion Group
Lightning Talk Series

DIGITAL COLLECTIONS IN TEACHING & RESEARCH

COLLABORATING ON DIGITAL COLLECTIONS IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Friday, March 26, 2021

11:00 AM PT/1:00 PM CT/2:00 PM ET

[Registration](#)

ENHANCING DIGITAL COLLECTIONS IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH WITH DIGITAL TOOLS

Friday, April 23, 2021

11:00 AM PT/1:00 PM CT/2:00 PM ET

[Registration](#)

HIGHLIGHTING A SPECIFIC DIGITAL COLLECTION IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Friday, May 28, 2021

11:00 AM PT/1:00 PM CT/2:00 PM ET

[Registration](#)

ABSTRACTS

COLLABORATING ON DIGITAL COLLECTIONS IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Opening the Digital Archives to the Classroom—Opportunities and Challenges

Patrice-Andre Prud'homme, Oklahoma State University

On many occasions, the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Archives have assisted faculty and students in their curricula, using a variety of curated digital collections. The archives coordinate their work with various academic departments, such as English, History, Art, and Geography. Prior to March 2020 before the pandemic, students would gather in the archives to learn about various collections for their class projects. For example, meeting in person has helped students in History and Art to get the essence of ancient coins from the Roman and Greek period even though the collection is accessible online. For other projects, such as field methods classes, Archives and Maps and Spatial Data coordinate their teaching, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and digital maps to learn about the history of OSU campus and its development over time. To encourage the use of digital collections curated for teaching and research, archives have introduced undergraduates in a class on Digital Methods in History with a basic understanding of what digitization entails and why metadata work is important. This coordinated effort with faculty has provided an opportunity to explain how digital collections are created and to share a common language with the students. This lightning talk will present the successes and challenges in using digital collections in classroom projects, as well as opportunities to further engage with faculty to expand on the use of digital collections for education and research.

Have It Your Way: Customizing Access to Collections for Instruction

Ashley Todd-Diaz, Towson University

Felicity Knox, Towson University

In the Towson University Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) department, we often collaborate with History faculty members to turn the archives into a critical thinking lab that introduces archival collections to students as resource material and challenges them to closely evaluate these sources as raw evidence. Often those classes are introductory seminar classes for freshmen who are new to the university, new to the rigor of college-level work, and have never been in an archives. For the fall 2020 semester our institution switched to all-virtual instruction, which meant our work had to be adapted to succeed in this new reality. In some cases, this presented challenges relating to which archives instruction session were appropriate for an online version and which would need to be re-envisioned, evaluating what materials currently existed in the digital collections and which would need to be digitized to support specific learning activities, and how we could maintain a high level of learner engagement in a virtual classroom. The faculty members we collaborate with see us as partners, and we know at this time this partnership demands creativity and flexibility from us. This presentation will address the challenges we faced, our lessons learned, and how we are applying this insight to prepare for a second semester of virtual instruction.

Digital Research, But Make It Fashion!

Bethany Herman, Houston Community College

The Houston Community College Digital Fashion Archive started as a labor of love and collaboration between the Fashion Design and Merchandising Program and HCC Libraries, but its potential as an instructional tool for beyond the fashion classroom soon became evident. A small percentage of pieces that span decades from the 1740s to the 2000s and represent cultures from around the globe was digitized at first as a means to preserve this unique collection of garments, accessories, and historical pieces. As the digitization process began, the collection was captured in such a way to help fashion students and fashion historians alike and has potential for reaching a larger academic audience. This lightning talk will highlight the background of how this collection was built, digitized, and eventually embedded in the curriculum as well as discuss potential ways institutions can create a broader audience for their small digital collections.

ENHANCING DIGITAL COLLECTIONS IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH WITH DIGITAL TOOLS

Library Support for Faculty Digital Projects

Wendy Mann, George Mason University

Alyssa Fahringer, George Mason University

George Mason University Libraries' Digital Scholarship Center (DiSC) has collaborated with Fenwick Fellows for the past several years to build digital collections using Omeka S. The Fenwick Fellowship program assists Mason faculty in pursuing a research project that utilizes library resources and collections, and preference is given to projects that involve and promote the Libraries' digital scholarship initiatives. The Omeka family of products is the leading open source web publishing platform for digital collections. We will discuss three projects we have been involved with in the past three years that have used or are currently using Omeka S. Each of these projects are unique and highlight Omeka's adaptability and wide-ranging use among different disciplines. The first project is an enumerative bibliography of anthologies of African American literature; the second uses the platform to display digitized records of botanical specimens from a local herbarium; and the third uses Omeka S to make the metadata of a collection of East German political and cultural posters from the Libraries' Special Collections accessible and searchable. During our lightning talk we will discuss how DiSC staff have collaborated with Fenwick Fellows to create these different projects. We will describe our workflows and how those workflows have been adapted to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic. We will also detail the advantages and difficulties of using Omeka S and the challenges our researchers have faced using it. Finally, we will end with how these projects have enhanced digital scholarship within the Libraries and the Mason community.

Connecting the Digital to the Terrestrial: Historic Drawings of Yosemite

Mike Wurtz, University of the Pacific

At University of the Pacific, the Holt-Atherton Special Collections and Archives curates the largest collection of John Muir papers in the world and has posted the richest materials to our digital repository. Utilizing a subsection of these papers, special collections staff have teamed up with Geology Department faculty to have students study Muir's original journals and drawings as digitized online. The famed naturalist John Muir was a master at observation and students are taught to practice observing the observer by looking at his drawings and making drawings of their own. In order to provide an immersive experience and scaffold the learning process, students visit Muir sites virtually through Google Earth as well as a field trip to Yosemite National Park to stand where Muir stood. At each stage, students are assigned the task of completing their own sketches of: the historic Muir drawing, the Google Earth image of the site, and a sketch of the real site. In conclusion, students make observations to note differences and similarities of their work to Muir's. The overall experience provides direct contact with primary source materials, increased observational skills, and critical appraisal skills. Incorporating archival materials into the classroom can provide a rich understanding of the topic and create a memorable participatory experience.

Teaching Metadata and Collection Lifecycles in the Humanities Classroom using CollectionBuilder

Olivia Wikle, University of Idaho

Cal Murgu, Brock University

Librarians play an important role in collaborating with instructional faculty to create classroom experiences that engage future generations of humanists through hands-on, project-based learning that complements and enhances disciplinary content. In the past, these types of instructional experiences were stifled by relatively 'heavy' and unsustainable infrastructural requirements, such as server space, databases, and programming. The recent development of minimalist computing tools, such as CollectionBuilder (<https://collectionbuilder.github.io/>), provides librarians with a lightweight infrastructure that focuses student attention away from a GUI interface and onto principles of information organization and data curation, skill sets that extend beyond digital libraries and enhance students' digital literacy. This presentation has two objectives: first, Olivia Wikle (University of Idaho) will discuss CollectionBuilder, an open-source tool for creating digital collection and exhibit websites that are driven by metadata and powered by modern static web technology, highlighting the features that make it an effective teaching tool; second, Cal Murgu (New College; Brock University) will share and reflect on a recent collaboration with three humanities faculty members and the Ringling Museum, which utilized CollectionBuilder as a vehicle to introduce students to principles of GLAM life cycles, data organization, and sustainable web development. Murgu will reflect on the successes and challenges of this type of instructional design, distribute the assignment template, and demonstrate student projects. Ultimately, participants will 1) learn about the educational aspects of CollectionBuilder's design and 2) acquire inspiration about how to use CollectionBuilder in the classroom.

HIGHLIGHTING A SPECIFIC DIGITAL COLLECTION IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Out of the Archives and Into the Classroom

Theresa Hessey, University of Delaware

In August 2018, I was asked to co-teach several sessions for Dr. Laura Helton's English Department capstone class: "Into the Archives: The Ephemeral Langston Hughes". This class focused on the Langston Hughes Ephemera Collection housed in the Library's Special Collections which features programs and broadsides that document the travels of poet, novelist and playwright Langston Hughes. In preparation for the class, I oversaw the scanning, metadata creation, and upload of the Hughes collection into UDSpace to facilitate student use. Because the material was not described at the item level but rather, was described and arranged topically at the folder level, Dr. Helton and I determined that students would be responsible for creating item-level metadata. Each student was assigned between 3-5 items from the collection to describe. I taught sessions on basic metadata standards, the establishment metadata fields, and issues of consistency and standardized formatting that would enhance discoverability. Students then used the metadata to discover themes across the collection and in groups of 3-4, were assigned the task of expanding on a particular theme using StoryMapsJS. I led a class on how to create a story map and a second class that looked at each group's project in draft form for class discussion. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fall 2020 Into the Archives course is being taught online. Students are using the metadata created by the previous class to design and complete an independent research project that uses the Hughes Collection as a jumping off point.

Discovery After Digitization: Encouraging Research Through Engagement

Selena Bryant, Cornell University

Deborah Cooper, Cornell University

This presentation will describe how a resource initially came to light through one patron's scholarly research. The Modern Farmer newspaper was one of the only serial publications published in the Depression-era United States that was aimed at African-American farmers. Mann Library at Cornell University holds the only known surviving print copies of this publication, and as a result of the researcher's inquiry the complete run was fully digitized and made freely accessible four years ago. Despite the increased visibility of the collection through digitization, the newspaper has remained largely unused and undiscovered. Recognizing the historical significance of this unique and rare primary source, two librarians created an outreach plan focused on increasing its visibility and usage for research. Learning about the collection led to the creation of digital tools, namely a research guide and Wikipedia page, to showcase its interdisciplinary potential. Through focus on building awareness of the resource, the expectation is that the collection can stand on its own as the driver of research engagement. Further outreach plans include a Wikipedia-edit-a-thon event on African American agriculture, and a digital exhibit involving collaboration with the institution's other special collection libraries. Presentations about the resource to internal and external library colleagues have also been effective in promoting The Modern Farmer. The presenters will discuss the usefulness of their approach as well as the lessons learned along the way.

Sharing a Digital African American Newspaper Archive: The “Weekly Challenger African American Digital Newspaper Archive and Research Guide”

David Shedden, University of South Florida -- St. Petersburg campus

The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus is honored to partner with The Weekly Challenger, a local St. Petersburg African American community newspaper, to preserve and share digital access to the newspaper's archives. The Weekly Challenger has documented the history of St. Petersburg's African American community since the paper was established by Cleveland Johnson, Jr. in 1967. Since 2016, the library and newspaper have worked in partnership to create a digital newspaper archive. The digital archive is a valuable primary source for researchers of journalism, history, anthropology, and other disciplines trying to learn about St. Petersburg's African American community. In 2018 the library successfully finished the scanning and digitalization phase of The Weekly Challenger archive project and in 2019 began focusing on using the collection's materials as a research and teaching resource. Many students and researchers don't know enough about the newspaper and local history to search The Weekly Challenger digital archive effectively. To meet that need, a detailed research guide titled the “Weekly Challenger African American Digital Newspaper Archive and Research Guide” has been created as a way to introduce topics, including a new section with Black Lives Matter related stories. The digital Weekly Challenger archive and its research guide remind us that news is often the first rough draft of history. Research Guide URL: <https://lib.stpetersburg.usf.edu/weeklychallenger>