Managing the Transition from Large-Scale Oral History Research to Digital Archive: The Digital Librarian’s Perspective

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Managing the Transition from Large-Scale Oral History Research to Digital Archive:
The Digital Librarian’s Perspective

Cory Lampert
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Oral History Association Meeting 2007
Digital world users want:
• Information 24/7
• Everything online
• Found in one place
• Fast!

Libraries and Archives:
• Evaluate and select quality sources
• Organize the information
• Preserve historic materials for the future
• Catalog with standards
• Processes proven, but take time
Librarians (historians, too?) like to search…

…everyone else likes to FIND!

Quote from Roy Tennant, originally published in *Library Journal* (2001)
Searching and Browsing

**Searching:**
- Known items (i.e title)
- Good once a research topic is decided upon
- Specialized users
- Indexes, TOC, glossary
- Depends on accurate dates, spellings and good subject indexing
- ITEM-LEVEL

**Browsing:**
- General broad interest
- Best when investigating topics
- Global audience
- Similar to shelf-browsing or to web: hyperlinks
- Depends on layout and keywords
- COLLECTION-LEVEL
Digitization Project Management

Phase One: Digital Conversion

Phase Two: Metadata

Phase Three: Online Presentation
Free Text vs. Controlled Vocabulary vs. Local Subjects

Free Text:
title, names, dates

Controlled Vocabulary
Jobs
Work
Labor

“EMPLOYMENT”

Local subjects: terms not found in authority files for controlled vocabulary, but essential to retrieving records on a particular subject.

Geographic names, proper names, or specialized jargon
# NSTOHP Data Dictionary for Descriptive Metadata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIELD</th>
<th>DUBLIN CORE METADATA STANDARD MAPPING</th>
<th>CONTENT SOURCE MATERIAL</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>AUTHORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Original transcript, Word file, NSTOHP list of transcripts</td>
<td>71 p. transcript; digital audio</td>
<td>[#pg.; format]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests, Series, Experiments, Operations Discussed</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>From Locations in TOC, index. Limit to verified locations on Test Site</td>
<td>Nancy; Sedan;</td>
<td>US Nuclear Tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locations at Nevada Test Site</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>From Locations in TOC, index. Limit to verified locations on Test Site</td>
<td>Nevada Test Site Area 400; Camp Desert Rock;</td>
<td>Getty Thesaurus for Geographic Names, or local standard [LOC format]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Subject</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>From TOC, index</td>
<td>Downwinders; Stewart Indian School; Dosimetry, Miss Atomic Bomb</td>
<td>Locally-created list. Check thesauri then assign term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next steps:

As back-end metadata and database records are completed…

We switch gears to create a visually appealing front-end for users.

Add pictures here? Something “visually appealing”
Challenges: Different professional cultures

Librarians

Oral Historians

Information Technologists

Add picture here? “Communication”
Challenges: Complex Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Tests, Operations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>Fulcrum</td>
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<td>AEC</td>
<td>Gasbuggy</td>
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<td>DOJ</td>
<td>Gnome</td>
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<tr>
<td>LANL</td>
<td>Hardtack II</td>
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<tr>
<td>LLNL</td>
<td>Kiwi (nuclear reactor)</td>
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<td>REECo</td>
<td>Latchkey</td>
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<td>NIH</td>
<td>Plowshare</td>
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<td>U of U</td>
<td>Project Pluto</td>
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<tr>
<td>JASON</td>
<td>Rover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNPO</td>
<td>Sedan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pictures?
Digital collections have wonderful potential to open up unique content to wider audiences and researchers around the world!

Picture?