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)
Organization and Retrieval on the Web
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
<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>
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<td>Format</td>
<td>Original transcript, Word file, NTSHOHP list of transcripts</td>
<td>71 p. transcript; digital audio</td>
<td>[#pg.; format]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Subject</td>
<td>From Locations in TOC, index. Limit to verified locations on Test Site</td>
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<td>US Nuclear Tests</td>
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<td>Getty Thesaurus for Geographic Names, or local standard [LOC format]</td>
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<td>Downwinders; Stewart Indian School; Dosimetry, Miss Atomic Bomb</td>
<td>Locally-created list. Check thesauri then assign term</td>
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</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

Agencies
DOE
AEC
DOJ
LANL
LLNL
REECo
NIH
U of U
JASON
SNPO

Tests, Operations
Fulcrum
Gasbuggy
Gnome
Hardtack II
Kiwi (nuclear reactor)
Latchkey
Plowshare
Project Pluto
Rover
Sedan

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

Picture?