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

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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

NSTOHP Data Dictionary for Descriptive Metadata

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

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

Add picture here? "Communication"

Oral Historians

Information
   Technologists

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?