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The Well-Rounded Archivist: A UNLV University Archivist Perspective

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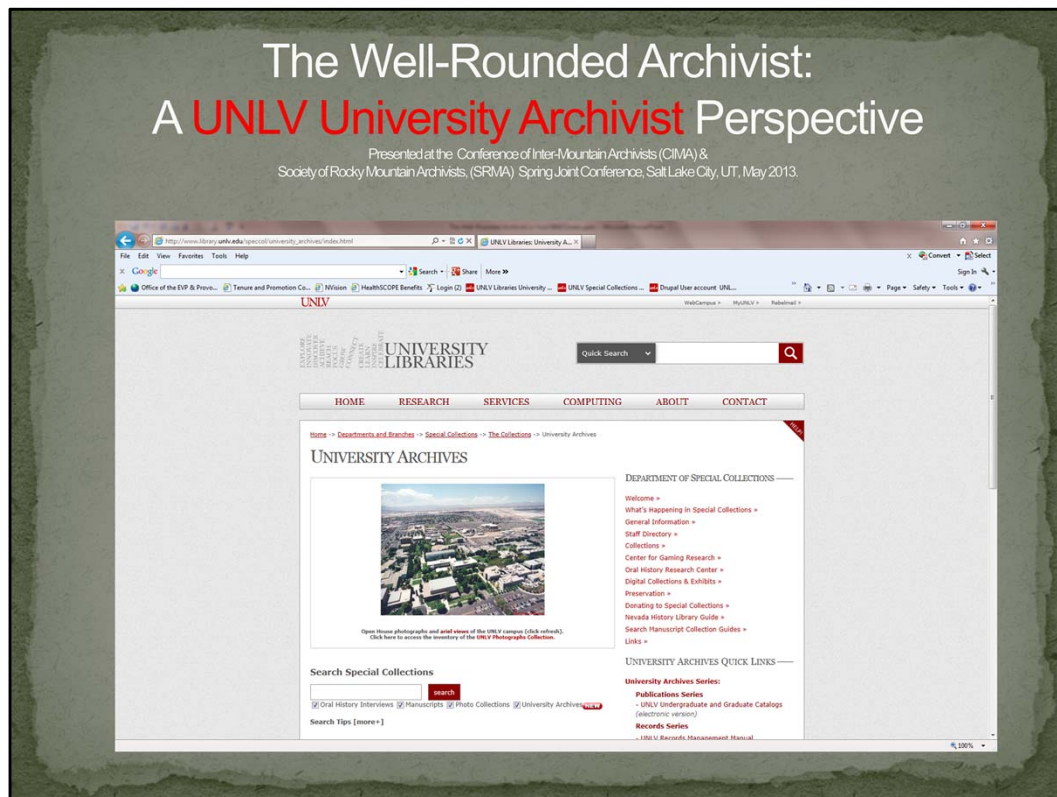
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The Well-Rounded Archivist in Your Mid-Career: How Do You Do It All and What Have You Learned?

"This panel discussion includes four archivists from various universities who are in tenure-track positions or have gone through the process of tenure. The many challenges of juggling work and family and personal life, as well as career and professional development responsibilities will be discussed. What these mid-career archivists have learned since graduate school about being an archivist and the profession, what they wish they had known at the start of their careers, and advice for new archivists will also be covered. Questions and insight from the audience will be highly encouraged."

Tom Sommer: The Well-Rounded Archivist: A UNLV University Archivist Perspective

Presented at the Conference of Inter-Mountain Archivists (CIMA) & Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists, (SRMA) Spring Joint Conference, Salt Lake City, UT, May 2013.

(Click)

Perceptions of an Archivist.



This is a nice illustration of the many perceptions of an Archivist. There are many faces to the Archivist, but today I'm going to focus on my career as a University Archivist at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

(Click)

The Well-Rounded Archivist: A UNLV University Archivist Perspective

- Being a University Archivist
- Wish I had Known...
- Advice for New Archivists

I'm going to be focusing on three main themes today.

The first theme will be "**Being a University Archivist.**" (Click)

Next will be the things that I "**Wish I had Known.**" (Click)

Lastly, I'm going to provide you a series of thoughts and feelings that center around my "**Advice for New Archivists.**" (Click)

(Click)

Being A University Archivist (at UNLV)

- Job Duties
- Service
- Research

There are three areas of focus in which I am evaluated for as a my tenure-track faculty member or University Archivist at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. These three areas of are:

- **(Click)** Job Duties
- **(Click)** Service
- **(Click)** Research

Job Duties



The first and most weighted area that I am evaluated on is my job performance. Therefore a job description had to be made that would include my title (University and Technical Services Archivist), who I report to, purpose & scope, as well as my duties & responsibilities.

Purpose and Scope of my Position:

I'm responsible for the management and development of the University Archives housed in UNLV Special Collections. I am also responsible for the management and content development for the Special Collections' website. I make finding aids accessible online via EAD and MARC creation. Lastly, I performing reference services.

(Click)

Job Duties



Some of my duties and responsibilities include establishing the physical and intellectual control over the University Archives. Here, you see a row of UNLV publications that I maintain.

(Click)

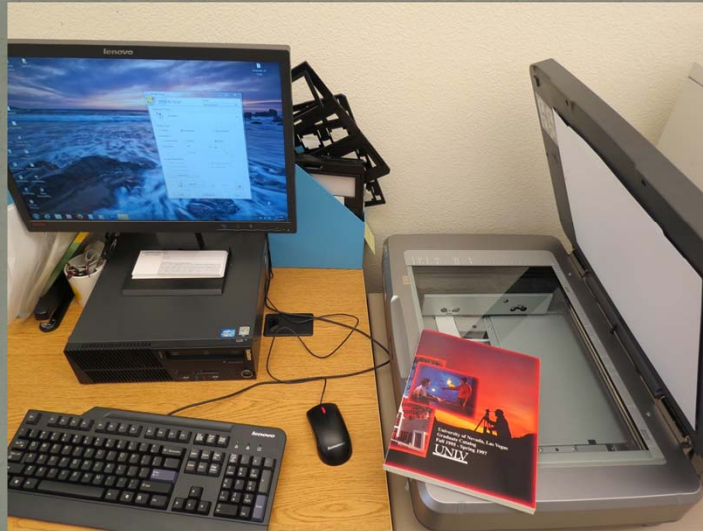
Job Duties



Here are the other materials housed within the University Archives. They include subject files from a Records Series as well as Nevada System of Higher Education material.

(Click)

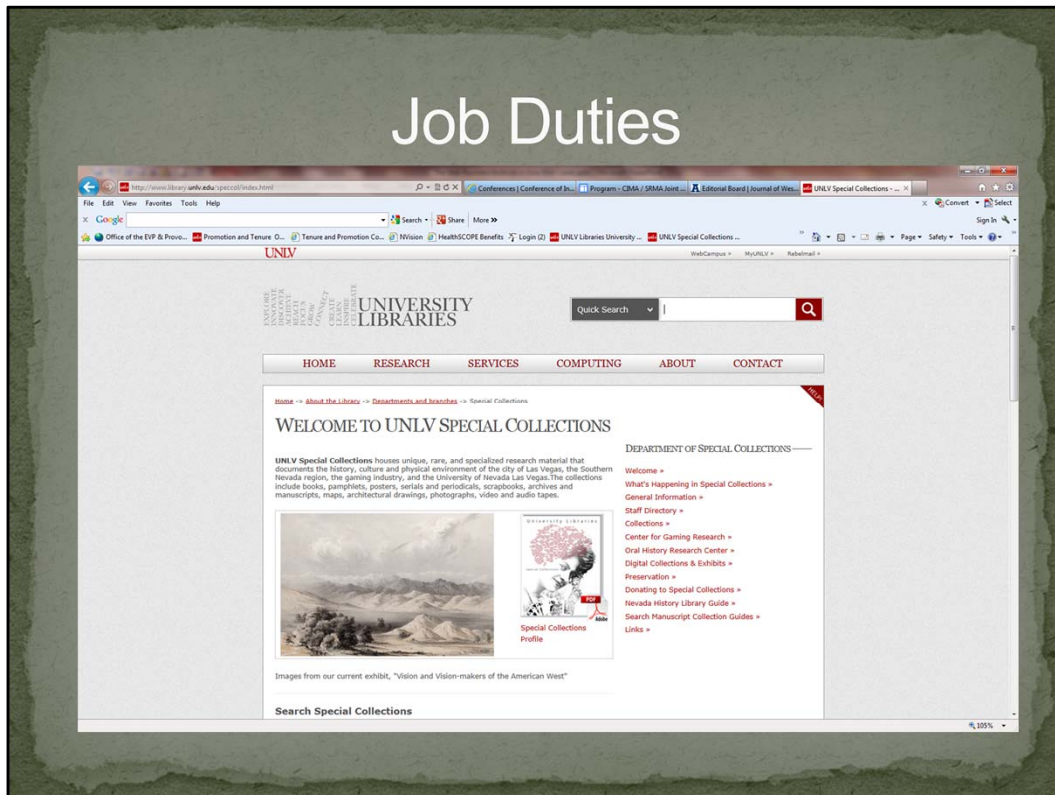
Job Duties



I also provide reference services for the University Archives. Here you see my locating, scanning, and e-mailing information regarding coarse descriptions for a patron.

(Click)

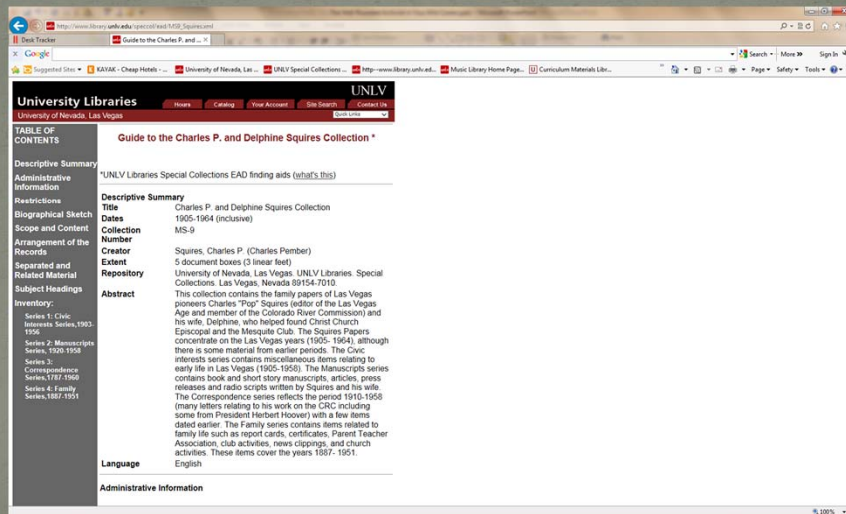
Job Duties



I also serve as the Web Editor for the Special Collections website.

(Click)

Job Duties



Some of my other duties and responsibilities include encoding finding aids of manuscript collections into EAD using Xmetal software and creating MARC records for these collections to place in the library's online catalog.

(Click)

Job Duties



Lastly, I promote University Archives both internally and externally. Here, I am promoting the University Archives via outreach efforts at my son's elementary school.

(Click)

Job Duties



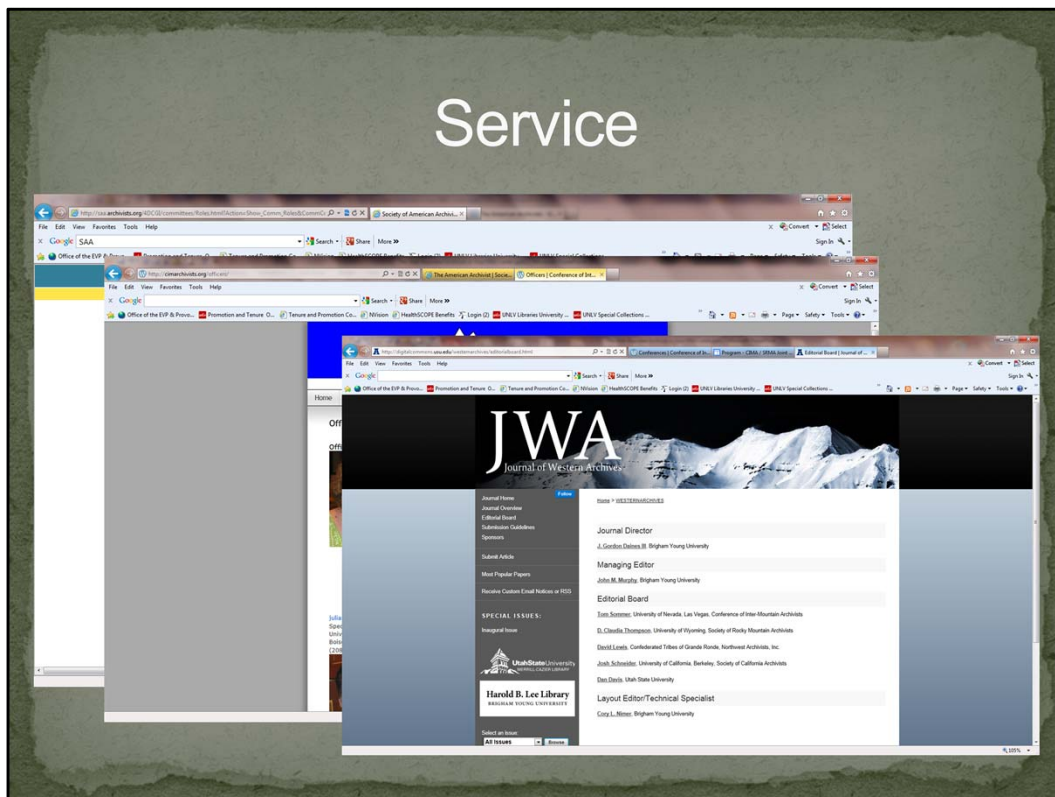
(Click)

Service



The second most weighted area that I am evaluated for is my service. I must establish and sustain an ongoing service in accordance with UNLV Faculty Bylaws and University tenure and promotion procedures.

(Click)



This service should take place at the local, regional and national levels. My service includes work with the following groups:

Professional and Learned Societies

(Click)

Society of American Archivists' College and University Archives Section Steering Committee (2012-2015).

The College and University Archives Section is one of the largest sections in SAA. I worked with the steering committee on updating the section's guidelines and in the planning of its annual meetings.

Society of American Archivists' College and University Archives Section Liaison to SAA's Standards Committee (2011-2013).

The liaison role allowed me to provide representation for my Section and act as a conduit of information regarding standard updates between these two units of the Society of American Archivists.

(Click)

Secretary of the Conference of Inter-Mountain Archivists (CIMA) (2011-2013).

This officer position helps conduct monthly meetings for the organization and maintains its minutes. This position maintains all files and records of CIMA.

(Click)

Editorial Board member for the publication *Journal of Western Archives* (2010 - 2012).

I represented the Conference of Inter-Mountain archivists as an editorial board member for this publication. The board would meet with the Journal Director and Managing Editor to plan and implement activities for this publication which included creating a marketing plan.

University

Elected member to the UNLV Faculty Senate's Faculty Development Leave Committee (2010 – 2011).

In this role, I helped review and select along with other UNLV faculty members from various departments which staff would receive professional development leave awards.

College/University Libraries

Co-Chair to the UNLV Libraries' Bylaws Committee (2012-2014).

In this role, I helped the Bylaws Committee with the review and updates for the Bylaws of the UNLV Library Faculty.

Co-Chair to the UNLV Libraries' Professional Development Committee (2009/2010 and 2011/2012).

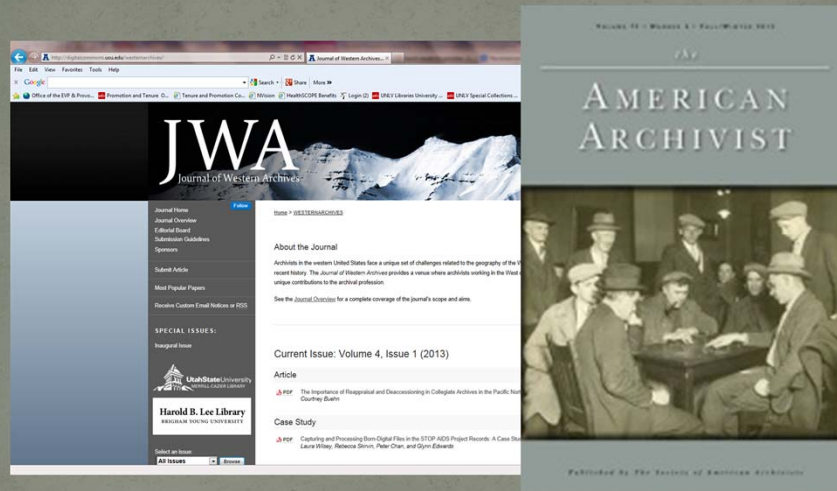
Created various programing for UNLV Library staff including a new Faculty Mentoring Program. Responsibilities included maintaining the related staff wiki page.

UNLV Special Collections representative for the UNLV Libraries' Digitization Advisory Committee (2008-2010).

In my role, I helped to review and choose digitization project suggestions from library faculty. The selected projects would be added to the digital collections queue for the Web and Digitization Services Department.

(Click)

Research



The last area that I am evaluated on is my research or scholarly efforts. I must establish an ongoing scholarship record, in accordance with UNLV Faculty Bylaws and university tenure and promotion procedures. **(Click)** This includes journal articles, presentations, and web reviews with regional and national peer reviewed publications. **(Click)** My research focuses on the areas of organization and description of university archives as well as the design of archival websites.

(Click)

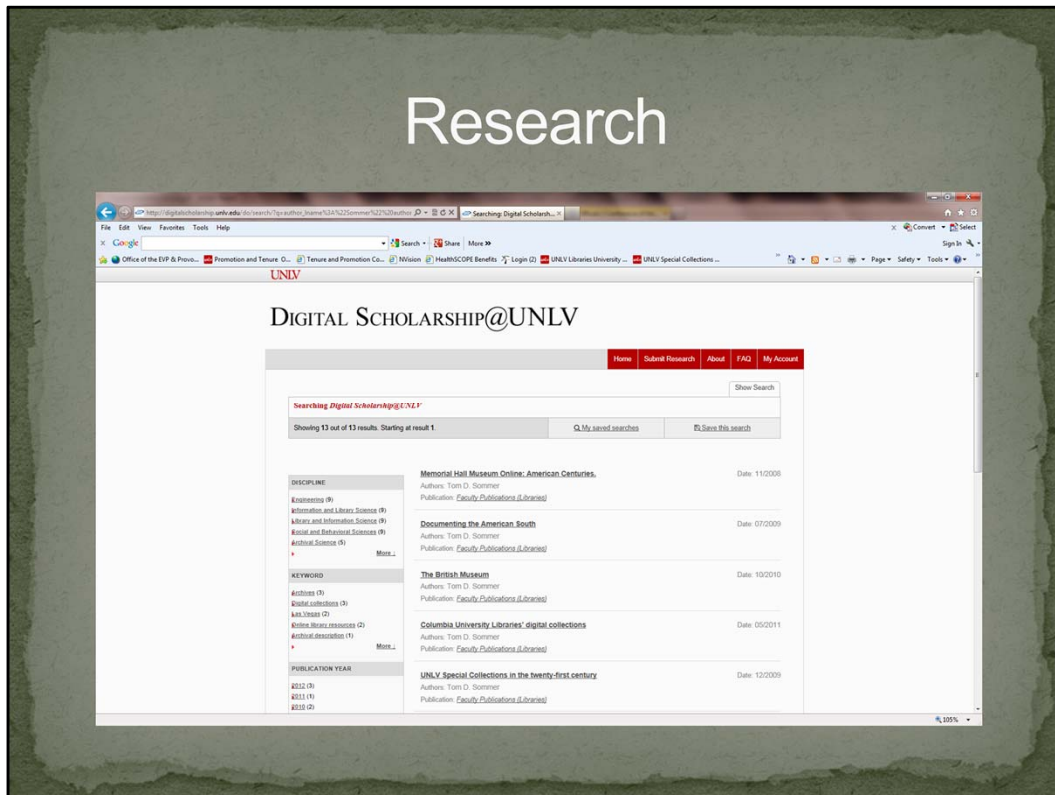
Research



Here is a screen shot of my journal article “UNLV Special Collections in the Twenty-First Century.” It was for the ALA peer-reviewed journal *Information Technology and Libraries* (ITAL).

(Click)

Research



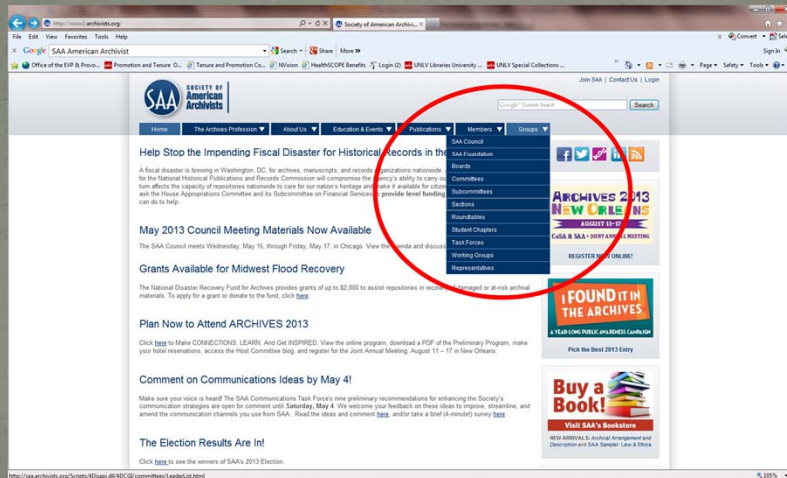
My research or scholarly efforts thus far include session presentations at regional conferences like CIMA and SOHA (Southwest Oral History Association). I have also presented at the national level. I presented at a session with the Society of American Archivists in 2009 (Austin, TX).

This is a screen shot of the UNLV Institutional Repository *Digital Scholarship@UNLV*. We are requested by the University Libraries to place all of our scholarly efforts within the institutional repository. The nice thing about placing your scholarly efforts within the IR is that it provides you monthly statistics as to how many people have downloaded your work. Items in the IR can be located via Google, as well.

(Click)

Wish I had Known...

- How to get onto SAA Committees faster – big organization.



Now, I would like to switch your attention to the things that I “wish I had known.” These are the things that I wish they had told me when I graduated from library school.

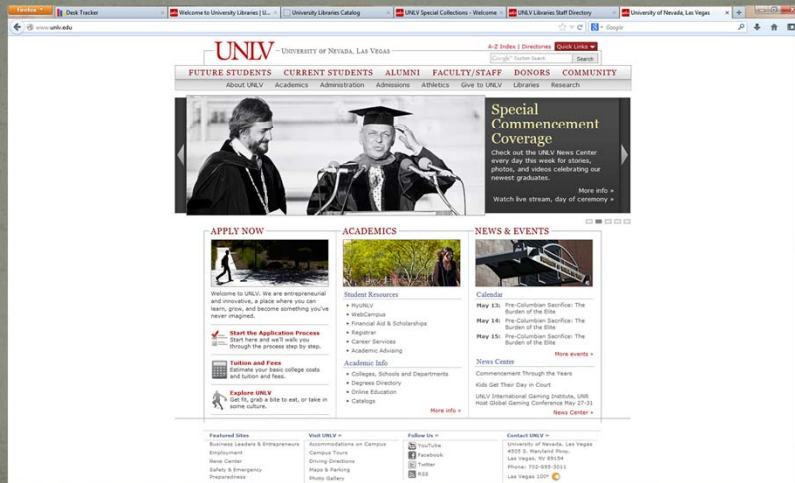
(Click) How to get onto SAA Committees faster – big organization. How do you stand out (e.g., SAA College and University Archives Section’s Steering Committee)?

The best answer is to keep networking. Eventually, you find that the contacts that you make over time will help put a face with your name. This can even lead to people recommending you for certain seats on committee boards. You have to keep adding your name to the committee ballots. It’s good to just start somewhere. Get your foot in the door. My first national service opportunity came in the form of becoming the Nevada Key Contact for the SAA Membership Committee. It was a nice opportunity for me to understand the administrative side of running a large, national committee.

(Click)

Wish I had Known...

- All the different kinds of academic and administrative units on a university campus.



I wish I had known all the different kinds of academic and administrative units on a university campus. This is an important aspect to the university archivists job. The best solution for this would be reading any books on the subject and researching the institution's website.

(Click)

Wish I had Known...

- Wish that I had grown up in the city in which I work in.

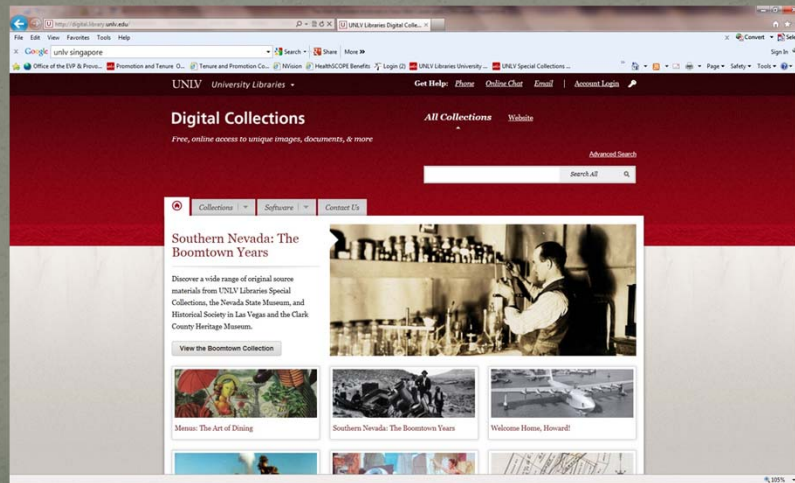


I wish I had grown up in the city that I work in. It helps with understanding the history of the institution and it's relationship to the surrounding community. I learned it afterwards through readings, getting to know alumni & faculty/colleagues, and current students.

(Click)

Wish I had Known...

- More about the growth in digital collections and institutional repositories.

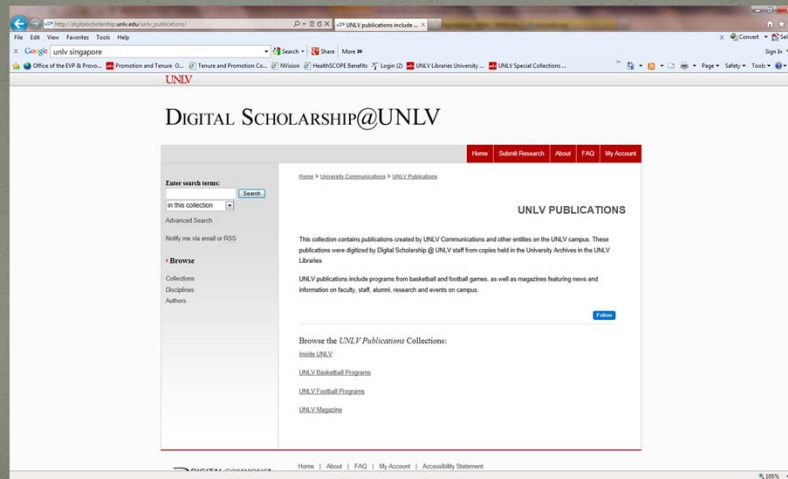


I wish that I knew more about the growth in digital collections and institutional repositories. This is a growth area in archiving and will continue to be far into the future. Digital collections and IRs provide easy access to digitized materials including university publications.

(Click)

Wish I had Known...

- More about the growth in digital collections and institutional repositories.

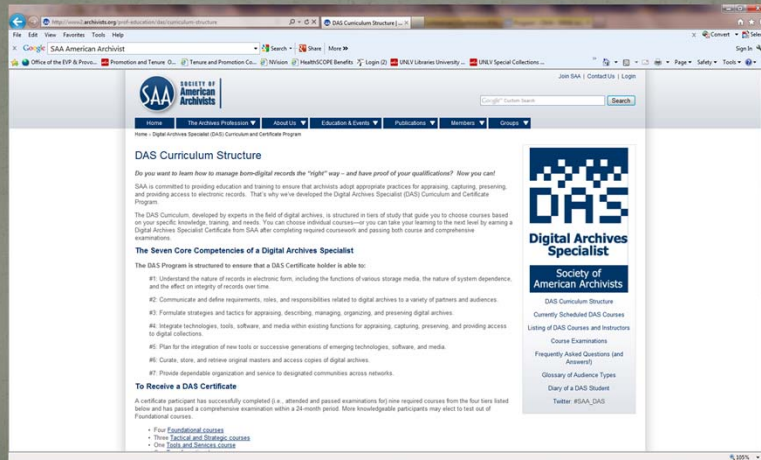


Patrons are always looking for easier access to a wide range of materials from the University Archives. We met those demands by digitizing and placing coarse catalogs, yearbooks (Epilogue), and newspapers (Rebel Yell) into the IR and digital collections. Patrons can now Google for these types of publications and research them like never before.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Take advantage of any relevant workshops at CIMA and/or SAA to stay on top of the latest trends and techniques.



Now, I would like to switch your attention to the “Advice that I have for New Archivists.”

Take advantage of any relevant workshops at CIMA and/or SAA to stay on top of the latest trends and techniques.

Talk to your supervisor about utilizing any resources to take part in skills building courses. Make sure that it aligns within your job description and the mission of the your unit. It will help keep your skills up to date with the rest of the industry and help your unit succeed as a whole. An excellent example of technical skills building would be taking part in the SAA Digital Archives Specialist Curriculum and Certificate Program. This is SAA program helps archivists who are dealing with the issues of trying to appraise, capture, preserve, and provide access to electronic records (i.e., “born digital”).

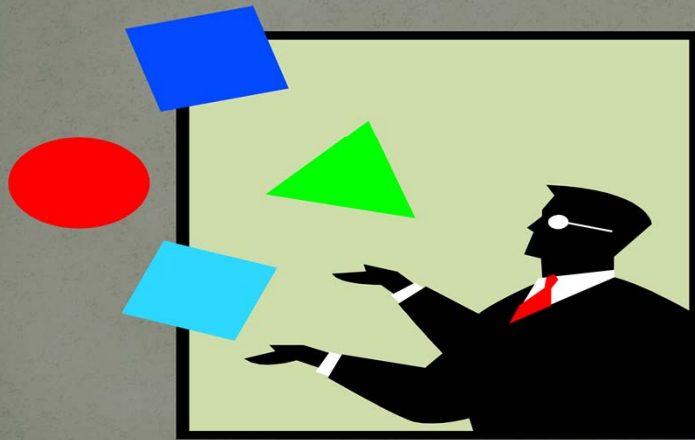
Don’t forget to look for leadership workshops, too. In the end, it’s good to balance out your technical skills with the ability to manage people. This will increase the probability in attaining managerial opportunities down the line.

Keep your job skills up to date and relevant.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Prioritize your tasks and time.



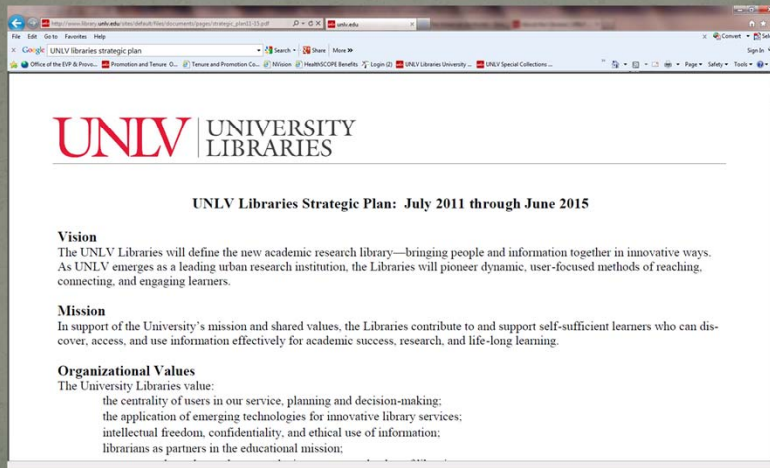
Prioritize your tasks and time.

Life is a full plate. I'm not the first person to admit that. However, like our parents, professors, friends, mentors and supervisors tell us. We need to prioritize our tasks based on importance and the amount time we have to complete them each day. Prioritizing your tasks based on importance and time avoids spreading yourself to thin.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Actively participate in the institution's strategic plan (i.e., show your value and impact on the institution).



Actively participate in the institution's strategic plan (i.e., show your value and impact on the institution).

This is a really important piece of advice for several reasons. Strategic Plans are becoming the norm at institutions across the country and even around the world. It's a road map for achieving the institution's vision and mission. Strategic plans help institutions reach these visions and missions. Get to know your institution's strategic plan and suggest tasks that you think will help achieve the overall goals and objectives of the institution. Try and tie as many your job duties to your unit's support for the institutions overall plan. This shows how your area actually makes an impact on the institution. In the end, you are showing value and relevancy to your job. Don't be afraid to jump in there and show your stuff. People want to hear from you. You are the expert in your area and they want to hear your professional opinion.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Take advantage of networking opportunities at local, regional and national conferences.



Take advantage of networking opportunities at local, regional and national conferences.

This is where you are going to make the career friends for life. These are the contacts that will let you know the latest trends affecting their own institutions and how they are addressing them. These conversations can turn into advice for your own institution. Also, these people will want to work with you on panels, journal articles and committees. Lastly, if you are a tenure-track faculty member at your institution, then your professional contacts will make great candidates for your external-letters packet.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Take part in research articles and conference presentations.



Take part in research articles and conference presentations.

Like the last piece of advice, I would work on a project and then suggest it as a journal article or session at a regional or national conference. Maybe you have a project that is similar to one of your colleagues within the field. Maybe you're working on a collaborative project that entails digitizing publications from the University Archives and placing them in the institutional repository. This is a nice idea on how collaborative projects make an impact on the institution by providing better access to historical materials from the University Archives. Take the opportunity to suggest a research article or conference session. Work projects are great springboards into scholarly efforts.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Balance your personal life with your work life (stay healthy).



Balance your personal life with your work life (i.e., stay healthy).

This is a tough one especially at the beginning of your career. But, don't underestimate it. We can all agree that when we get involved in our jobs that it can take up a large part of our lives. We want to make a great impression, but forget that a large portion of our day is at work. You need to find time to turn it off for a while at night and on the weekends. Yes, some of us take our work home with us, but you still need some outlets. Work takes a lot of your attention. However, you need to be able to turn it off during down time. I would suggest spending more time during your down time on activities that you really enjoy. They can be getting involved in physical activities. Take your kids to the park as much as possible. A little Vitamin D can go a long way. The sun is a great energizer for life. Get outside and do the things that you love.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Have a 5 year plan (whether in a faculty position or not).



Have a 5 year plan (whether in a faculty position or not).

Are you where you want to be? How can you get to where you want to be whether within your institution or outside of it? Make a plan to get there. Then, implement that plan.

One way to achieve your career goals would be to stay up date on the necessary skills to help your institution meet the expectations of your patrons. This could come in the form of learning how to manage “born-digital records” from your institution. It could be understanding the importance of metadata and it’s relation to digital collections and institutional repositories. SAA is addressing these digital environment issues through the creation of the Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Curriculum and Certificate Program.

Finally, if one of your goals is to be a manager one day, then look for leadership workshops from SAA or even ALA. One particularly good one is “Planning Your Next Career Move: Developing the Skills to Make it Happen” from ALA’s LLAMA Career Institute. It’s a nice primer for learning communication, leadership, and collaboration skills.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Stay on top of the research articles and look for leadership opportunities on local, regional, and national committees.

The screenshot shows the SAA website with the following content:

College & University Archives Section Steering Committee

[Member Access](#)
[Official Email Discussion List](#)

College & University Archives Section Steering Committee Roster
 Total Members/Participants: 13

Member Links to contact information require [member login](#).

Last Name	First Name	Role	Term	Company
Brandenburg	Alison	Chair	8/14/2010 - 8/17/2013	Indiana University South Bend
Yagis	Rachel	Vice Chair / Chair-Elect	8/14/2010 - 8/17/2013	Luther College
Deaton	Kate	Steering Committee Member	8/17/2011 - 8/16/2014	New York University
Engels	Ellen	Steering Committee Member	8/14/2010 - 8/17/2013	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Giering	Cynthia	Steering Committee Member	8/14/2010 - 8/17/2013	Michigan State University
Hartwig	Daniel	Steering Committee Member	8/17/2011 - 8/16/2014	Stanford University
Nash	Katie	Steering Committee Member	8/17/2011 - 8/16/2014	Kean University
Sommer	Tom	Steering Committee Member	8/14/2010 - 8/13/2013	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Stiller	Katherine	Steering Committee Member	8/14/2010 - 8/13/2013	Bates College
Widder	James	Steering Committee Member	8/17/2011 - 8/16/2014	Bates College
Braverman	Michelle	Ex Officio (Newsletter Editor)	8/17/2011 - 8/16/2014	Marquette University
Dalbary	Claude	Ex Officio	8/17/2011 - 8/16/2014	University of Southern

Stay on top of the research articles and look for leadership opportunities on local, regional and national committees.

This is a great idea in that it familiarizes you with the other professionals in your line of work. It also keeps you on top of the latest trends affecting your area of work.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Develop a nice rapport with everyone.



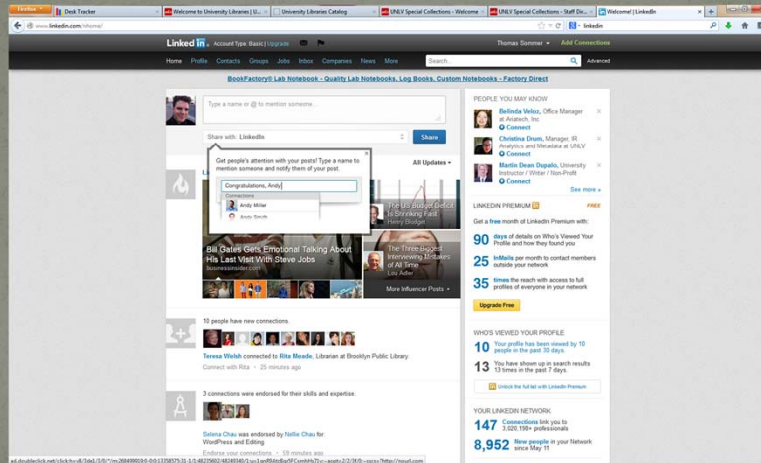
Develop a nice rapport with everyone from your Dean to the President of the institution.

This helps put a face on your title. They will think of you more often when related topics come up to them. Always tell them what you're doing at any opportunity. Remind people of your own unit's mission statement and how your area of responsibility supports it.

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Advice for New Archivists

- Use the website LinkedIn



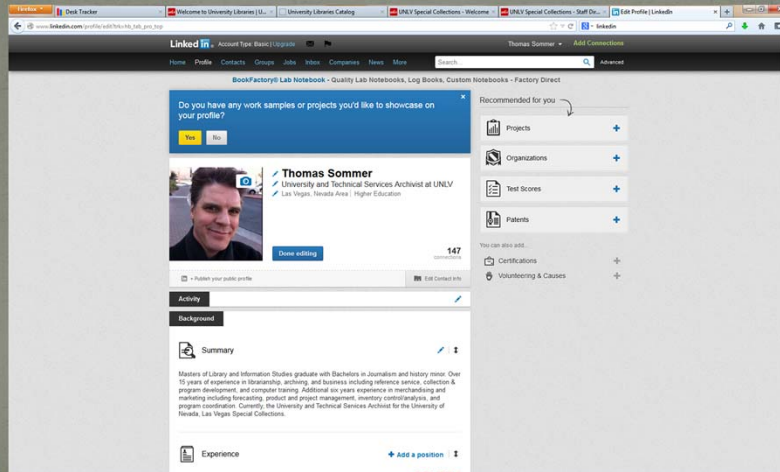
Use LinkedIn

This is a great tool to help you network not only in your field, but that of others who work on you campus. You can add your CV to your page as well as send and receive e-mail from the professionals that your “connect” with online.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Use the website LinkedIn

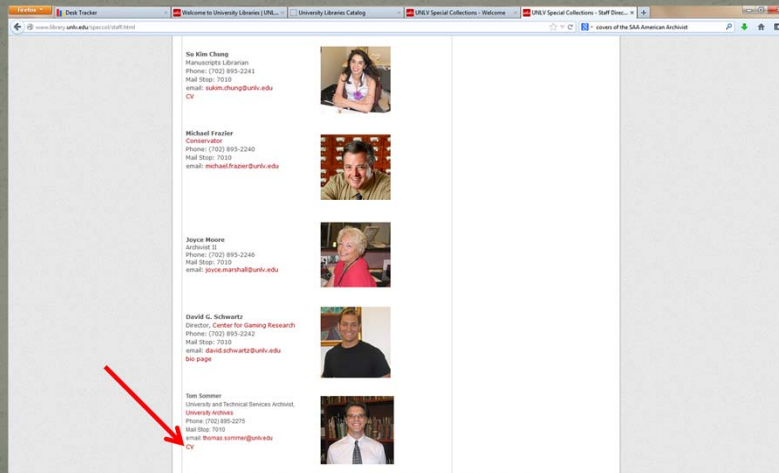


Don't forget to use a profile picture in which your smiling. It's not only professional, but inviting to the viewer. It shouldn't be a personal picture, either. Make sure it's in a professional setting.

(Click)

Advice for New Archivists

- Place a link to your updated CV.



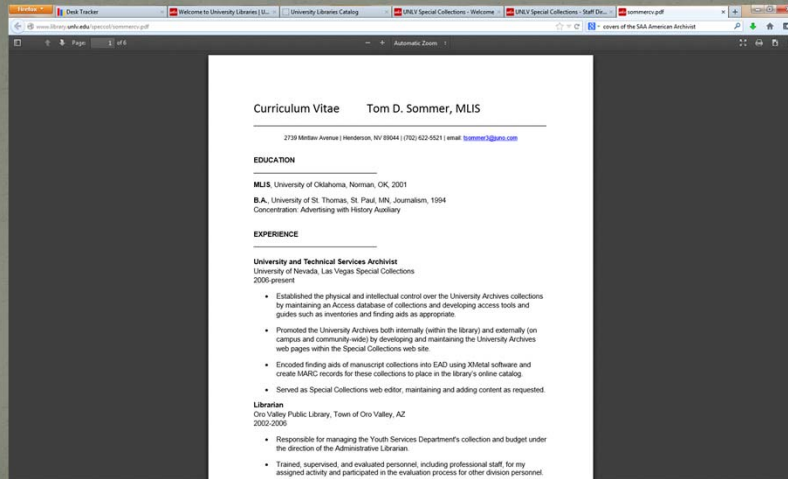
Place a link to your updated CV.

Place it near your name and title on the department's website (i.e., directory or contact information page).

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Advice for New Archivists

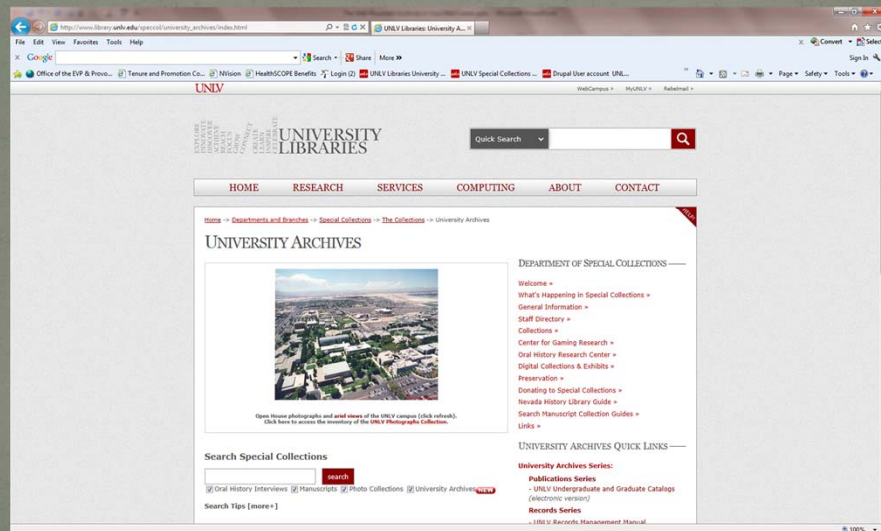
- Place a link to your updated CV.



Here is what mine looks like after you click on it's link. It opens a PDF version of my CV. Don't forget to update your CV whenever you get a chance. This is a easy way for not only patrons to get to know your education and experience, but professionals, as well.

(Click)

The Well-Rounded Archivist: A UNLV University Archivist Perspective



Thank you for listening to my presentation today on “The Well-Rounded Archivist: A UNLV University Archivist Perspective.” I hope that you found it insightful. Further, I hope that it provided valuable advice to help you reach all your career goals.