UNLV Special Collections in the twenty-first century

Tom D. Sommer

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, tsommer10@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/libfacpresentation

Part of the Archival Science Commons, and the Cataloging and Metadata Commons

Repository Citation

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/libfacpresentation/14

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Library Faculty/Staff Scholarship & Research at Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Faculty Presentations by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.
Archiving websites have come a long way in the past 15 years. HTML was the standard by which we lived for a long time. A standard that has served us well. Now this standard has become static. Companies began to realize that end users wanted to contribute to a website. Thus, the need for interactivity grew more and more in the last several years. The end user was now able to add value to information. This collective intelligence idea or Web 2.0 grew very quickly not only in the commercial side of the Internet, but now in the academic side, as well. Archives are now responding to end users like never before. The following are examples of how archives from around the world have responded to these Web 2.0 demands from our users.
An institution that utilizes Web 2.0 services is **Temple University’s Urban Archives**. Their “Ask a Librarian” service allows students and librarians to communicate instantly via instant messaging.
There are other Web 2.0 ideas like “tagging” or “folksonomy” and “comments.” This engages the researcher by allowing them to add their own knowledge on a subject.

One archiving site that has utilized this idea is Haags Gemeentearchief/Hague City Archives in the Netherlands. This site allows the user to enter their own descriptions to photographs (ala Flickr). The goal is to provide as much detailed information as possible for the next user of the photograph. There were even instances where users corrected the official descriptions.
Another Web 2.0 feature is “Recommender Systems.” The Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections is a site that features a more implicit recommender system.
Specifically, it uses link paths, found at the bottom of every page and function as a type of automatic recommender system. This system relays immediate feedback to researchers on how other visitors reached a particular item or collection. Link paths may be another avenue for researchers to locate information via alternate interrelations between subjects and collections. It is similar to a feature found on Amazon.com’s catalog (e.g., “Researchers who viewed this page also viewed…”). This retracing of steps from other visitors may be a growing Web 2.0 trend.
Another Web 2.0 idea within the archiving field is the “Mashup.” It’s the idea of combining two databases to make one source of information. You can see this being used within the Biodiversity Heritage Library website. This site uses a Google Maps feature and it’s catalog to help patrons access it’s online records in an expedient manner.
UNLV Special Collections has been actively working towards creating an archival space in the 21st Century that assists its patrons’ quest for historical discovery. This discovery has helped patrons ranging from researchers to students. The UNLV Special Collections has created a space of discovery that has incorporated several different points of access that include: “virtual exhibits”, “search boxes”, and “digital collections.”

UNLV Special Collections has even added Web 2.0 features to aid in the discovery of their historical material. These Web 2.0 features have ranged from a “What’s New” blog to digital collections with interactivity features.
One point of access of discovery within the UNLV Special Collections is their **virtual exhibits**. The virtual exhibits were created as static html pages that showcase unique materials housed within its collections. They show the scope and diversity of materials available to researchers, faculty and students.
One example of a virtual exhibit is “Dino at the Sands”. This virtual exhibit is a point of discovery for the history of not only Dean Martin, but of “The Rat Pack.” The photographs in this exhibit come from the Sands Collection. It is a static html page, but provides information and pictures regarding one of Las Vegas’ most famous entertainers. This exhibit contains links to not only The Rat Pack information, but various resources on Dean Martin ranging from books to videotapes.
Lastly, this virtual exhibit contains a wide range of digitized photographs of Dean Martin.
UNLV Special Collections and Web 1.0: “Dino at the Sands” Virtual Exhibit

Dinah Martin’s opening night in the Copa Room, March 6, 1957
Jack Entratter, Jack Benny at the front table; Lucile Ball, Desi Arnaz, Deanna Reynolds to right
Another point of access within UNLV Special Collections is a new “Search Box.” This search box is located on the homepage of the site. It searches the inventories to the manuscript, photograph, and oral history collections within UNLV Special Collections. The purpose of its creation was to expedite the discovery of material within the collections. For example, a researcher would not have to drill down through the website to locate the right collection. They can now go to one space to search for various types of material. A “one-stop-shop” if you will. The index that comes back to the researcher is easy to read and highlights the key word that was entered into the search box.
Another point of access within the UNLV Special Collections is the digital collection. Digital collections are digital copies of original materials. These digital copies are presented online and organized to be easily searched. Each digital collection offers full-text searches, browsing, zoom, pan, side by side comparison, and exporting of digital objects for presentation and reuse.
Here is the homepage to the “Las Vegas and Water in the West” digital collection.
Here is the homepage to the “Southern Nevada and Las Vegas in Maps” digital collection.
Finally, here is the homepage to the “Showgirls” digital collection.
UNLV Special Collections has continually strived to stay on top of the latest trends in discovery. This now includes blogs, wikis, and Web 2.0 features within its digital collections. All of these new trends have aided our patrons pursuit of discovery.
For example, UNLV Special Collections has a “What’s New” page that has blog like features. This blog allows staff to post news items and allows patrons to add comments of their own. Lastly, it includes an RSS feed feature. This blog was one of the first steps from UNLV Special Collections to add Web 2.0 features to its Website.
UNLV Special Collections created a staff Wiki page for internal use for library staff. It mirrors the original website for UNLV Special Collections, but the wiki capabilities allow library staff to add their own information.
As stated earlier, one of the points of access within the UNLV Special Collections is the digital collection. However, the latest digital collections include Web 2.0 features. Before we look at some of these new Web 2.0 features let’s take a look at the steps to creating a digital collection at UNLV Libraries.
The basic steps to setting up a digital collection within UNLV Libraries have been:

1. Special Collections provides the content.

2. UNLV Libraries’ Web and Digitization Services (WDS) scans the items provided (e.g., photos, documents, and maps).

3. WDS creates the metadata.

4. WDS designs the website.
Now, UNLV Special Collections have gone the extra step by adding Web 2.0 features within the new digital collections. Specifically, they have added a “Comments” section, “Rate It” feature, and a “RSS” feature. These latest Web 2.0 additions continue to aid in our patrons’ discovery of historical material by allowing an interactivity never before seen on the UNLV Special Collections Website.
Here is an example of a “Comments” feature located within the Howard Hughes Digital Collection.
Howard Hughes Digital Collection
with
“Comment on Object” Feature (cont.)
Here is an example of a “Rate It” feature within the Howard Hughes Digital Collection.
Finally, here is an example of a “RSS Feed” feature within the Howard Hughes Digital Collection.
Another example of a digital collection with Web 2.0 features is the “Southern Nevada: The Boomtown Years”. This particular digital collection brings together a wide range of original materials from various collections located within UNLV Special Collections, the Nevada State Museum, and Historical Society in Las Vegas and the Clark County Heritage Museum. This digital collection even provides standards–based activities for elementary and high school students. This is the latest digital collection from UNLV Libraries and provides a range of useful discovery features like “Recent Comments”, “Tags”, and “Google Maps” to various Southern Nevada Boomtowns.
Here is the “Recent Comments” feature within this digital collection.
Here is the “Tags” feature within this digital collection.
Finally, a “Google Maps” feature was included within the Boomtown Years digital collection (i.e., Mashups).
Lastly, the UNLV Special Collections has planned and implemented a “Facebook” website that allows another avenue of discovery for its patrons. One can not only post comments, but access information on the various resources located within our collections.
In conclusion, the UNLV Special Collections has planned and implemented several online tools that allow patrons access to its extensive resources. These tools range from virtual exhibits to a Staff Wiki page to digital collections with Web 2.0 features. UNLV Special Collections has strived to stay on top of the latest trends in discovery in order to benefit all its patrons. These steps by UNLV Special Collections has allowed them to expand their reach and use into the 21st Century.