The fearless Lone Arranger

Are you ready to ride, Cowboy?
It ain’t your Mama’s digitization project any more
In the beginning

Oya Rieger

Anne Kenney
In the beginning

Moving Theory Into Practice

4/11/2013

Slide set 1
In the beginning

Moving Theory Into Practice
And then *they* rode into town

Dennis Meissner  
Minnesota Historical Society

Mark A. Greene  
University of Wyoming

MPLP, Fall 2005
Them’s fightin’ words

  • ‘The archival profession has been unwilling or unable to change its processing benchmarks in response to the greater quantity of acquisitions.’
  • ‘The result tends to be a small number of beautifully processed collections.’
  • ‘It is time that we focused on what we absolutely need to do instead of on all the things that we might do in a world of unbounded resources.’
  • ‘…We evince a dismaying lack of concern for user access to our holdings.’ … ‘haphazard dedication to certain rituals’… etc.
  • Users don’t care about item-level description
Them’s fightin’ words

• Instead:
  • ‘We should be paying more attention to… research access to all our holdings, rather than being content to process a few to perfection.’
  • ‘What is the least we can do to get the job done in a way that is adequate to user needs now and in the future?’
  • Use databases to locate different areas of the collection, rather than full-on reprocessing
  • Not all collections need to be treated with the same level of intensity
  • Open un-processed collections to researchers
  • Be tougher on appraisal and deaccessioning (or fearless)
Digitization meets MPLP

The ideal
- Carefully done, in-house scanning
- High-resolution lossless images
- Comprehensive metadata and export
- Standards and quality control
- Preservation of scans

The real
- Scanning vendors
- JPEGs
- Metadata by keyword
- Stand-alone systems linked virtually
- ‘Good enough’
- Don’t promise ‘digital preservation’
The Twitter Moment

- April, 2010: Library of Congress agrees to archive Twitter.
  - Free to LoC, a donation from the company
  - 21 billion tweets and counting at the time
  - 170 billion tweets and counting today
  - No advance preparation, just take it!
  - Today (April 2013), storage and backup are secure
  - Searchability still in development
  - Gnip.com offering commercial access for a price
- The takeaway: Digitize now, grab now, figure it out later!
Sidebar: Digitization and preservation

SCANNING IS NOT PRESERVING.
Who is a Lone Arranger
What is he or she up against
What’s in that holster you’re wearing, Cowboy?

**HOW LONELY *ARE* YOU, ANYWAY?**
How lonely?

JUST DON'T MAKE ME USE A COMPUTER!

I'M WRITING A HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE!

The predecessors
How lonely?
How lonely?
How lonely?

Anonymous guy in Florida

Really?

Average completion 2 weeks
If MSMC can do it...
If MSMC can do it...
If MSMC can do it...
If MSMC can do it...
If MSMC can do it...

The Mount Archives blog

Monday, March 18, 2013

The 2013 Jubilarians

Featured photo

IT'S ST. JOSEPH WEEK, the annual event honoring the patron saint of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and a time when we honor all the CSJs with strong ties to the College, especially those Sisters celebrating their anniversaries in the Order. They all continue to provide remarkable service long after ordinary people would be thinking about retirement. Here are some thumbnails of the 2013 honorees from the archives of the CSU Los Angeles Province and MSMC.

About Me

Vicky the Archivist

Los Angeles, Calif.

A Lone Ranger with a digital background managing a paper archives. I answer research questions, write finding aids, make speeches and assist students. I also teach preservation management in the San Jose State library school and do consulting work in digital preservation. I spent most of my career as a journalist at the L.A. Times, but archiving is ever a bit as exciting and a lot more fun.

Blog Archive

- 2013 (12)
- March (3)
- The 2013 Jubilarians
- Chaper school
- The Mount campus, 1931
- February (4)
- January (4)
- 2012 (59)
- 2011 (38)
- 2010 (38)

View my complete profile

Followers
If MSMC can do it...
If MSMC can do it...
Issues with Lone Arrangers

‘An individual who works alone or with only part-time or volunteer staff.’ — Christina Zamon

• Lack of funding
• Little or no dedicated budget
• Too many priorities
• Do-it-yourself IT support
• Overwhelming backlog
• Few opportunities for conferences, networking
• Not necessarily full-time job, pulled away
• Non-professional volunteers
Benefits for Lone Arrangers

- Few colleagues understand what we do all day
- Modest successes can be made to look like digital magic
- Flying under the radar
- Freedom in decision-making
- Reduced expectations for integration, interoperability
- Ability to set policy on our own
- More and cheaper tools out there all the time
- Not having to share the kudos (if any)
- Win-win-win – almost anything we do is better than things were before
Is that a six-gun, Cowboy?

- Empowerment through FEARLESSNESS
  - We CAN put collections online
  - We DON’T HAVE TO be perfect
  - We don’t have to be burdened by metadata like
    - ... EAD
    - ... MARC
    - ... LCSH
    - ... DCME
  - We DO have to be curious
  - We DO have to enjoy technology (up to a point)
  - We DO have to understand and explain what we do, don’t do – and why … empowerment through policy
  - We CAN be empowered by a confident attitude