

Digitization is in the Details: Using Data from Patron Research Patterns to Enhance Accessibility

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Abstract: Materials like yearbooks, catalogs and university governance are highly requested items at a university archive. For Illinois State University, we decided to digitize these items to make them more accessible to our out-of-town alumni and researchers. Digitizing these materials was a huge accomplishment for the department and helped us achieve our goal of gaining a larger web presence with our patrons. But where do we go from here? All too often, archivists tend to think we know what our patrons want but in some cases, our digital efforts are rarely viewed online. What parameters can we follow in choosing materials for digitization that not only follow our desires but those of our patrons?

This poster presentation will set the parameters for a research project set to take place during the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 terms at the ISU University Archives. The Archives will gather use data from our online resources and requested physical materials to identify patterns in our patrons' research behavior. The poster will address the problems specific to our institution and repository: obtaining institutional permissions needed to survey our patrons, overcoming technical hurdles to gather our online data, and addressing the challenges of being located off-campus. The poster will also look at the type of data we hope to gather including all of the evidentiary values patrons are collecting within the requested materials. This data can include detailed demographic information or academic activities specific to a department. With this data, we hope these values will show us a more granular research pattern among our patrons. We hope that the results will help guide us in our digitization decision-making and further enhance accessibility to our digital and physical materials for our patrons.

About the author:

April Karlene Anderson is the University Archivist for Illinois State University. Anderson earned her MLIS from Florida State University and her MA in History from the University of Central Florida. Prior to her arrival at ISU in 2011, Anderson worked at UCF where she processed a wide variety of collections, created numerous physical and web-based exhibits, and worked with a number of talented students. Anderson has also done consulting work, helping companies like the American Automobile Association to set up their archives program. Anderson recently contributed a chapter on mobile technologies in archives for the book *The Handheld Library: Mobile Technology and the Librarian*. Though a native Floridian, Anderson enjoys her adopted home state of Illinois and can often be found biking, hiking with her dog, Zoey, and maybe catching a Cubs game in Chicago.