Minimizing Compromises: Enhancing Access to Large-Scale Digitized Collections

Archivally Inspired Description

Problem
For the project *Cultivating a Revolution*, the project staff at the NCSU SCRC wanted to scan more materials than we have on previous projects. Selection was done at the folder level, rather than at the item level, which presented a conundrum about what should be described in the metadata: each individual item or the folder as an aggregate?

Accessibility vs. Discoverability
Selection at the folder level meant that project staff scanned everything in each folder, increasing the level of production, and thus increasing access to our materials. Each individual item was no longer described, so there was more time to scan more materials. The lack of individual descriptions meant that the materials were less discoverable on the web even if more of the collection was accessible.

Solution
After meeting several times with a group composed of the project staff, technical service archivists, and metadata librarians, a workflow and set of metadata guidelines was put in place.

*Scan at an accelerated pace*

*Using a tool to reuse existing archival description from the collection guide, brief or “stub” metadata records are created for each folder. These descriptions provide basic information about the folder (title, collection information) and allow them to be online quickly*

*After being uploaded online, DAOs are added to the appropriate collection guide*

*Within a month of materials being online, metadata and cataloging staff who have processing experience enhance the descriptions of the folders much as an archivist would describe a collection; with subject headings, name authorities, and folder scope and content notes, to increase the discoverability of the materials via the web*

Supply Chain Diagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Manager</th>
<th>Graduate Assistants</th>
<th>DC Technology Librarian</th>
<th>Metadata Creators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder Selected</td>
<td>Listed on Spreadsheet</td>
<td>All Folder Contents are Scanned</td>
<td>Images and stub metadata uploaded to web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stub Description created for folder</td>
<td>Within a week</td>
<td>Within a week</td>
<td>Within a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanned Images moved to server</td>
<td>Within a week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAOs added to finding aid</td>
<td>Within a month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stub metadata enhanced which immediately updates metadata online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workflow

**Brief ("Stub") Record**

**Enhanced Record**

**Folder information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Diagram (Envelope 41115) :: Negatives :: Physical Characteristics and Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item identifier</td>
<td>mc00033-002-bx0009-002-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Project</td>
<td>Cultivating a Revolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Links in Collection Guides to Digital Content**

**Links to Physical Collection in Digital Interface**

http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/specialcollections/projects/cultivating-a-revolution.html

SAA Research Forum: “Foundations and Innovations” August 7, 2012 San Diego, CA

Kristen Merryman, Project Librarian, Cultivating a Revolution: Science, Technology, and Change in NC Agriculture 1950-1979

2 Broughton Dr. North Carolina State University Libraries, Raleigh, NC 27695

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2. Curing and Spraying Correspondence (Folder 2 of 3), 1962-1963
3. Curing and Spraying Correspondence (Folder 3 of 3), 1962-1963
4. Equipment on Loan Correspondence, 1965-1967