Metadata Reconciliation for Enhanced Visibility of Archival Collections

Colleen Farry, Digital Services Librarian
Assistant Professor, Weinberg Memorial Library, The University of Scranton
digitalservices.scranton.edu

Introduction

This poster presents on a metadata reconciliation and enhancement project for a collection of archival photographs. The goal of this remediation work was to generate descriptive metadata to enhance discoverability of an otherwise hidden collection of images.

Background on the Collection

The Terry and Paula Connors Photograph Collection, part of the University of Scranton's Archives, documents the work of Scranton freelance photographer Terry Connors from 1976-present. The collection includes photographic negatives of the events, places, and people of the University of Scranton community. The images were delivered to the Archives in envelopes with incomplete handwritten event information.

Problems with the Data

- Illegible handwriting on original negatives envelopes
- Limited descriptive information available for each event
- Misspelling of names and events
- Missing event titles
- Limited staff time to research each event

Date on	# of strips/negatives	Description (include additional info, like confusing dates)
1977-00-00		Pitts. Ave
1977-00-00		copies
1977-00-00		untitled
1977-00-00		D.C.
1977-00-00		Tom McGuff; his house
1977-00-00	3 strips, 6 negs	D.C. Mothers
1977-00-00		FI-ah meeting
1977-00-00	2 strips, 3 negs	Pol. Science
1977-00-00	3 strips, 5 negs	at Fr. Bryons Office
1977-00-00	4 strips, 8 negs	Nasser; INS
1977-00-00	1 strip, 1 neg	Math Penn Bank
1977-00-00	4 strips, 12 negs	Leshove?
1977-00-00	8 strips, 15 negs	Hanley College Party
1977-00-00	5 strips, 8 negs	Rally?
1977-00-00	8 strips, 15 negs	Green Ridge Club
1977-00-00		Graduation & Honors Degree Dinner; date questionable
1977-00-00		Graduation & Honors Degree Dinner; date questionable
1977-00-00		Graduation & Honors Degree Dinner; date questionable
1977-00-00	1 strip, 4 negs	H&S of Chris Cullen; date questionable
1977-00-00	4 strips, 12 negs	PDD 1-12; date questionable
1977-00-00		Dr. Harding; Electronics Presentation; Lawyers
1977-00-00		Wall St. Award; ROTC Awards Banquet; Law Enforcement group; Fund.
1977-00-00		N Surface; UofS Seal; Admin. Dept.; Schultige?
1977-00-00		Copy of Mary Scranton; Peter Hoffer
1977-00-00		Herri Pasquerie Polish Dancers; Misc.

Examples of incomplete, messy data captured from the original envelopes

Goals of Metadata Reconciliation

The first phase of this project involved remediation work by library staff in the Digital Services and Special Collections departments as well as student workers. Team members reviewed the existing data from the image negatives, reconciled that data against controlled vocabularies, and created readable, searchable data for the collection. This work involved research of proper names for people, places and events, as well as some natural language processing using OpenRefine.

Text, Name, or Abbreviation From Transcription Field	Official Phrasing & Spelling
Dean Bushely	Dean Charles J. Buckely
Dean Johnson	Dean Ronald Johnson (former Dean of the School of Management)
Dr. West	Dr. Daniel J. West, Jr.
Prof. Revey or Prof. Greavy	Dr. George C. Reavy (Business)
Dr. Suhay	Dr. Joseph A. Szuhay (Human Resources)
Dr. Doughist	Dr. Joseph C. Dougherty (Political Science)
Dr. Evans	Dr. Joseph T. Evans (Biology)
Dr. DeMichele	Dr. Michael D. DeMichele
Dr. McDermott	
Dr. Petowic	Dr. Njegos Petrovic
Dr. Champagne	Dr. Raymond W. Champagne, Jr. (History)
Dr. Passon	Dr. Richard H. Passon
DICE	Drug and Alcohol Information Center and Educators
ECRC	Electronic Commerce Resource Center
Eng	English Department
Flog	Flag
BB Team	For this record, recommend finding the envelope in the box and looking at the negative.
H&S	Headshot
H.N.A.	Hill Neighborhood Association
Dr. Murray	If the assignment is from the 1970s or 1980s it's probably Dr. Frank J. Murray (John J. Murray was named professor in the 1950s so probably not him). Since we're not 100% sure if there is yet another Murray, please use the following: Title: Professor Murray, [add year] Description: Black and white photograph of University of Scranton Professor Murray.

TRANSCRIPTION OF ENVELOPE	NEW TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT	DESCRIPTION
Grad. School Let.	Graduate School Lecture, 1992	Photographs of a University of Scranton graduate school lecture.
P.R. class group	Class (Misc.), 1992	Group photograph of University of Scranton class.
copy of lecturer	Guest lecturer, 1992	Photographs of an unidentified guest lecturer at The University of Scranton.
copies of hon. Deg. Recap	Honorary Degree Recipients, 1992	Photographs of University of Scranton honorary degree recipients.
B&W of new building rendering and shield	Building Rendering, 1992	Photograph of a rendering for a new University of Scranton campus building.
copies of 1st UofS Jesuit	Jesuit, 1992	Photographs of a University of Scranton Jesuit.
Part of Beth and Fiance	Headshots (Misc.), 1992	Head shots of unidentified University of Scranton community members.
Pres Circle Tre family	President's Circle, 1992	Photographs of the University of Scranton President's Circle.
Check Presentation from specialty	Check presentation, 1992	Photographs of a check presentation event.
Meeting at estate with cong. Banks and CofC	Scranton Estate, 1992	Photographs of a meeting held at the Scranton Estate with members from the Scranton Chamber of C
Different Scenes at library for record and call box	Library (Misc.), 1992	Miscellaneous photographs of the University of Scranton Library.
Teacher in long lab with student	Faculty Member and Student, 1992	Photograph of unidentified University of Scranton faculty member and student.
Series of copies trustees, speakers, etc.	Campus community (Misc.), 1992	Miscellaneous photographs of University of Scranton campus community members, including memb
Different Areas of Library	Library, 1992	Miscellaneous photographs of the University of Scranton Weinberg Memorial Library.
Comm. B	Commencement, 1997	Photographs of the 1997 University of Scranton commencement ceremonies and related events.
Comm. C	Commencement, 1997	Photographs of the 1997 University of Scranton commencement ceremonies and related events.
Comm. D	Commencement, 1997	Photographs of the 1997 University of Scranton commencement ceremonies and related events.
Two Students Planning a Play, 1991	Students, 1991	Miscellaneous photographs of University of Scranton students, 1991.

Examples of project team notes on reconciled spellings and descriptions for event titles

Metadata Enhancement

The second phase, currently in development, focuses on a crowdsourcing platform to gather descriptive metadata from the University of Scranton community. Because much of the information for the images is still unknown, the crowdsourcing platform will ask users to identify the people, places and events depicted in the photographs. The descriptive information gathered through the crowdsourcing platform will be used to enhance search and discovery of the images in the library's digital collections.

Crowdsourcing tools provide ways for institutions to harness the institutional knowledge of the crowd by using technology to engage a community of users to make contributions to a project. A crowdsourcing interface for the Connors Collection will give the campus community an environment within which they can share their knowledge of the people, places and events depicted in the images.

Selection of Crowdsourcing Resources

- **Omeka Plugins** – Collecting, Folksonomy, Scripto
- **Concordia** – open-source software developed by the Library of Congress to power crowdsourced transcription projects
- **FromThePage** – a system for preparing collaborative digital editions with crowdsourced transcription
- **Scribe** – open-source framework for community transcription
- **Zooniverse Project Builder** – platform for people-powered research

What motivates a volunteer user?

- Interest in the subject matter and collection
- Being part of a community of users with similar interests
- Sharing their expertise and knowledge
- Contributing to a shared goal for a community
- Receiving recognition for their contributions

3 factors underlying motivation based on the Fogg Behavior Model:

1. Motivation: interest, providing help, recognition, mission
2. Ability: knowledge of material, technical expertise, time
3. Trigger: reminders, signals, rewards, acknowledgment

Strategies for Acknowledging Users

- Provide options for users to either create a user account or contribute anonymously
- Be transparent about progress and share statistics regularly
- Acknowledge volunteers by name
- Promote the project through newsletters, blog posts, and social media
- Reward high achievers in shared statistics

Selection of images from the Terry and Paula Connors Photograph Collection from the University of Scranton Archives

Challenges and Considerations

The Collection
- Need to define a clear goal for users
- Should be a big challenge to encourage a large community of users
- Provide clear metrics for progress and results

The Platform
- Needs to be intuitive and reliable for users
- Provide simple instructions for contributing
- Responsive to mobile devices

The Crowd
- How do we reward users?
- Can we enable users to interact with each other?
- Are there offices on campus to team up with?
  Office of Advancement, Development, Alumni Relations, Student groups and Academic Departments

The Content
- Clearly communicate its historical significance to the campus community
- Continually add new images as more negatives are digitized
- Trigger users by drawing their attention to funny, interesting, significant, or unusual images within the collection through social media

Progress on Digitization

Over the past year, the Digital Services Department in the Library has been digitizing the Connors negatives to build a collection for crowdsourced descriptive metadata.

26	Boxes of Photographic Negatives
28	Years of Photographs
6,087	University Events
100,000	Approximate count of individual photographs

Sources

Selected readings that informed the development of this project include:

Brabham, D.C. 2013. *Crowdsourcing*. MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ciolfi, L, Areti Damala, Eva Hornecker, Monika Lechner, and Laura Maye. 2018. *Cultural Heritage Communities: Technologies and Challenges.* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

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Ridge, M. 2014. *Crowdsourcing Our Cultural Heritage*. England: Ashgate.

Terras, M. 2016. "Crowdsourcing in the Digital Humanities." in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities.* Schreibman, S., Siemens, R., and Unsworth, J., eds. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.