10-18-2019

Digital Collections in the University Classroom: Inspiring your faculty with regional content

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Digital Collections in the University Classroom

Inspiring your faculty with regional content

Kelley Rowan, FIU & Christopher Davis, FAU
Historians in the Library

City of Miami Beach
http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dPanther/collections/imbda

Digital Scholar Studio
dss.fiu.edu

Virginia Key Beach Park Trust
http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dPanther/collections/vkt

Mile Markers Collection
http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dPanther/collections/mile
Mile Markers Collection

Thomas Adams of Green Turtle Cay, Bahama Islands
http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FI1809070/0/00015

Gutman Kirchik of Romania
http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FI1809070/0/00838
Collaboration

• Reach out to departments with a job opportunity for their students
  • Humanities
    • History
    • Journalism
    • Religious studies

• DSS / DH?
Challenges for Librarians

• Time spent on Grant writing/cost
• Training time
• Network access
• Space
• Varying skill levels
• Personnel issues
Benefits for Librarians

• Metadata creation by historians
• Key words developed by users
• New perspectives on the collection
• Digitization work
• Time
• Exposure of collections
Benefits of Library Experience

• Discovered previously unknown resources
• Saw how library was connected throughout university
• Developed an awareness and application of key library language
• Gained higher interest in local history and how it relates nationally
• Greatly improved job opportunities
• Real job experience
• Opened up a whole new career possibility
• Able to integrate library resources into the classroom
• Applying historical training to something tangible
• Learning to problem solve and find work-arounds
• Appreciated professionalism and mentorship of librarians
• Learned:
  • Adobe suite
  • OCR
  • Metadata
  • Archival quality digitization
  • Solutions for data stored on outdated formats
Challenges of Library Experience

- Didn’t know library resources existed before
- Better communication of job expectations between department and library
- Help adding library experience to CV
- Earlier exposure to library experience
- Could have turned library work into a dissertation
- Work was occasionally monotonous
- A single mistake could involve hours of work to fix
- Students need to come to library work with the ability to manage their work/study time
Should YOU include Historians in the Library?

• Do you have the space?

• Do you have the time to train?
  • Metadata
  • Subject headings/Authorities
  • Rights statements
  • Organization

• Do you have the funds?
  • Grants
  • Volunteers
  • Work study
Expectations of position

• Serve as background historian for the Digital Library
  • Provide expert information for pieces in the collection

• Improve the Archive
  • Use research skills to fill gaps
  • Provide links to between sources

• Reorganize Databases
  • Make sure everything is accurate
  • Accessible for academic use
Realities of Position

- Employed different kind of historical skills
  - Less expertise from dissertation
  - More field methods
- Public History has a different purpose
  - Outside the box analysis
- Quickly master computer literacy
  - On the spot training

- Complimented the tasks of the Digital Librarians
  - Complete on-going projects
    - Grant deadlines vs. University Projects
  - Reorganization of old projects
    - Missing files/information
  - Metadata creation
    - Can be tedious, monotonous
  - Audio/Visual Transcription; OCR Scanning
    - Equipment setup and/or failure
Application of historical skills

- Cross-referencing entries for accuracy
- Verifying Dates, Names, Events
- Creating easy to understand summaries
- Using analytic skills to connect sources
- Reading old/damaged files
- Deciphering odd sources
- Understanding the value of collections
- Creating Digital Bridges for researchers
Library skills acquired

• Metadata creation
  • Library of Congress Training
  • Cleanest Spreadsheets

• Harnessing the power of the Adobe Suite
  • Not just Photoshop

• Knowledge of key applications
  • Transcription
  • OCR

• Importance of archiving data
  • More than just a holding pen
Benefit of library experience to the historian

- **Exposure to other parts of the process**
  - Historians utilize sources rather than making archives accessible
  - Metadata critical to make collections viable for researchers
  - Realize the value of repositories and how they are presented

- **Explore other facets of field**
  - Focus on Local/Regional documents vs National/Global studies
  - Move away from purely academic investigations
  - Introducing digital resources for 21st Century classrooms

City of Miami Beach Archive
http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/M800000335/00001
Overview of Digital History project

• Students access the dPanther Repository to conduct a primary source examination

• They must connect sources on South Florida’s past to topics in Modern America

• The format is in-depth analysis of sources rather than typical essay

• Goal is to understand the purpose, the relevance, and the importance of the sources on both a local and national level

• Students explore digital archives to find a topic that allows rethink course themes
Results

• Students rediscover aspects of South Florida History
  • Miami Beach as military training site during World War II
  • Coral Gables as the model of American suburbia
  • Rediscovering Jim Crow Miami

• Students produced better essays
  • These were the best essays all semester
  • Many are natives to the region
    • Better connections to their history

• Explore Digital History in the Classroom
  • More use of digital archives when appropriate
  • Export this model to future courses
  • Reach other to libraries about access of collections
Discussion

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Coral Gables Memory Collection:
http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FI12062802/00001
Credits from dpanther.fiu.edu

• Slide 4: Mile Markers Collection - http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/MM00002553/00001
• Slide 5: Boynton Beach Photograph Collection – http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FI19041221/00001
• Slide 6: Virginia Key Beach Park Trust - http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FIVK000083/00001
• Slide 7: Mile Markers - http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/MM00004799/00001
• Slide 8: Coral Gables Memory Collection: http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FI12060905/00001
• Slide 9: Mile Markers Collection: http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/MM00008259/00001
• Slide 10: City of Miami Beach Archives - http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/MB17072415/00044
• Slide 11: Zoo Miami - http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FIZO002434/00001
• Slide 16: City of Miami Beach Archives - http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/AA00000036/00001
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