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## Context is Key: Library and Archive Collaboration for Digital Projects

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### Abstract

Libraries and archives have different underlying philosophies towards items, metadata, goals, and core processes in their respective fields. With the proliferation of digital libraries and digitization efforts, both kinds of organizations can benefit from working together for the benefit of patrons and researchers. Presented in this article is a case study of a collaboration between the Texas Tech University Libraries Digital Resources Unit (DRU) and the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library (SWC), an archive of cultural heritage materials.

### Keywords

Archives, Digital libraries, Digitization, Digital Collections

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## Context is Key: Library and Archive Collaboration for Digital Projects

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### Abstract

Libraries and archives have different underlying philosophies towards items, metadata, goals, and core processes in their respective fields. With the proliferation of digital libraries and digitization efforts, both kinds of organizations can benefit from working together for the benefit of patrons and researchers. Presented in this article is a case study of a collaboration between the Texas Tech University Libraries Digital Resources Unit (DRU) and the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library (SWC), an archive of cultural heritage materials.

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### Introduction

This article is about working together despite competing priorities and vocabularies. As archivist David Gracy II pointed out in 2006, the "Information Age has . . . [united] the institutions and services of libraries and librarians, archives and archivists, museums and museum professionals, and preservation administrators and conservators in the fundamental enterprise of stewardship of our shared cultural record."<sup>1</sup> Yet while galleries, libraries, archives, and museums – often bundled together under the acronym "GLAM" – share a mission, they work towards it in distinct contexts, each with their unique goals, cultures, and standards. This can cause wildly different understanding of even the most

basic projects. This article is a case study describing how even though archives and libraries' foundational vocabulary surrounding digital items, metadata, and collections differs, and even though the two groups' fundamental approach to digital project goals and core processes are often disparate, both kinds of organizations can find common ground. There are tremendous benefits in initially attempting to – or even doubling back midstream to – realign understanding of these factors during the creation of digital archival collections. Doing so benefits not only the organizational partnership, but also the discoverability and access experience of patrons. This is the story of collaboration between the Texas Tech University (TTU) Libraries Digital Resources Unit (DRU) and TTU's Southwest



Collection/Special Collections Library (SWC), an archive of cultural heritage materials, and the rocky road to their mutual success.

### Literature Review

The nature of collaboration on digital projects involving both libraries and archives is a decades-old conversation in constant evolution. Strategies have been proposed and pursued, lessons learned, then forgotten or miscommunicated, rediscovered, proposed again, and relearned. No single multi-institutional report or case study has halted this pendulum, as will be shown in the following literature review, but the case study of Texas Tech's archivists and librarians presented in this article propels the ongoing discussion forward via its own unique insights.

Early publications show an understanding of the core concepts underlying archival-library collaboration. In 1998 The Library of Congress (LOC) elucidated the benefits of a national digital library, stating, "Academics, educators, and librarians [agreed] about the rationale" for a system of widespread electronic access to the collections of cultural heritage institutions.<sup>2</sup> The Society of American Archivists had seen the inevitable advent of digital collections the year before, emphasizing foundational archival principles such as maintaining the sanctity of copyright.<sup>3</sup> A year later, the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) articulated archival analog and digital collections' possession of a "logical coherence that binds the contents together" and "a totality that enhances the research value of each individual item beyond what it would have in isolation."<sup>4</sup> Context, they argued, is essential to a patron-focused digital collection. Librarians should internalize that concept while archivists should, in turn, continue to emphasize it and its unique vocabulary. The building blocks for librarian-archivist collaboration were in place: a desire to create the content; a nascent understanding of institutional

and patron needs; and attempts at conceptual cross-education.

Harvard had been thinking along similar lines. In 1998 a team of archivists, funded by CLIR, published a comprehensive series of questions and criteria for selecting digital materials in *Selecting Research Collections for Digitization*.<sup>5</sup> Emphasizing patron utility and demand, project cost, copyright ramifications, and other administrative considerations, it provided tools to help librarians and archivists alike share their collections digitally in a patron- and resource-conscious manner. Kristin Brancolini applied this Harvard model to the University of Indiana's Hohenberger Photograph Collection. It worked to her satisfaction, proving to her that there were objective means to ascertain digital potential among an archive's holdings.<sup>6</sup> In 1998 Andrew Hampson independently devised a series of questions similar to the Harvard model, but emphasized cost-benefit analysis, and even more so the digital projects' copyright implications.<sup>7</sup>

At that time, librarians and archivists were thinking about the big picture. Yet despite these examples, much of the literature produced in the two succeeding decades deplored a gap between archivists and librarians' understanding of digital collections. Where had the tenets established in these early years gone? Perhaps librarians and archivists had begun to emphasize the trees over the forest. For example, zeroing in on copyright and cost-benefit became normalized. Copyright challenges were Sarah Hamid's primary focus in her 1998 exploration of the challenges of digital collection creation, noting copyright's inextricable affect on the already subjectively problematic process of selection.<sup>8</sup> Peter Astle and Adrienne Muir also observed that selection of materials was "driven primarily by copyright restrictions rather than user demand" in the United Kingdom's public libraries, but, in the vein of Andrew Hampson, also weighted heavily the cost-benefit approach to digitization.<sup>9</sup> In

2008 Alexandra Yarrow, Barbara Clubb, and Jennifer-Lynn Draper, in a plea for greater collaboration between libraries and archives, focused on fiscal and temporal cost, the sharing of resources, and the benefits of raising the visibility of collaborating institutions.<sup>10</sup> If such collaboration was present, their other criteria were taking widespread rhetorical precedence. Even massive consortial projects, such as a 2011 search by a large roster of Minnesota archives for a shared digital asset management platform (DAM), emphasized administrative-level budgetary and intellectual property protection. Although authors Dora Wagner and Kent Gerber's work here was a valuable examination of numerous high-level case studies, one is left wondering what the boots-on-the-ground, collaborative experience entailed.<sup>11</sup> Were fiscal management, abundant selection tools, and ever-improving technology to make holdings accessible leading to more frequent collaboration?

Over this question there was a – no doubt inadvertent – butting of expert heads. Conflicting differences kept obscuring valuable similarities. Hamid, for example, despite her many invaluable observations about the challenges facing digital projects in their early years, seemed to misunderstand archival practice: "...content is inherently a subjective, abstract concept that, by definition, gains 'meaningfulness' only upon access to and subsequent analysis through the medium that contains it." As a result, "preservation of the medium is...what archival preservation has always been about in practice if not theory." This is a curious mischaracterization, ignoring the principles of contextual understanding of an archival object's intellectual milieu, irrespective of media, whether analog or digital.<sup>12</sup>

It is possible that Hamid's misunderstanding resulted from a terminology gap between librarians and archivists. Texas Tech's archivists and librarians found this to be true in the case study documented in this article, but they were, by far, not the first to observe it. Liz Bishoff noted in

2004 that librarians, archivists and, for good measure, museum professionals, have "different organisational [sic] cultures, and lack a common language," they "talk at cross-purposes" despite "common goals and visions." Collaboration is absolutely possible, she believed, but even simple concepts, such as the way they describe their metadata schema, sometimes proved a major hindrance.<sup>13</sup> Take for example Jane Hutton's 2008 argument that while libraries directed resources toward creating digital access points for their own online collections, they would be best served to capitalize on their resources by "[pursuing] metadata standards to support cross-searching, collaborative projects, and development of e-resource search software which integrates with the library catalog."<sup>14</sup> This is an excellent suggestion, and one widely implemented in the ensuing decade. Yet she was not writing about archival metadata, but rather about the rapidly expanding market for e-books. The language sounded the same, yet was semantically different. That same year, when Adrian Cunningham dedicated resources toward educating the National Archives of Australia's staff on digital archiving, he determined that the Library of Congress and CLIRs' usage of "the phrase digital archive [had] been misused." It did not apply solely to librarians, nor to archivists, but rather to several areas of expertise in both libraries and archives. The frequent, liberal conflation of "digital archive" between these areas "confuses the purposes, training, and mission of archives and digital stewards."<sup>15</sup> While he was not directly addressing Hutton's assertions, he was observing the dissonance behind her vocabulary.

Emily Monks-Leeson observed similar semantic tensions in 2011, emphasizing that many organizations were not distinguishing between *archives* and the *practice of archiving material*.<sup>16</sup> Archivist Christopher Prom declared that same year: "archivists lack a systematic understanding of how people interact with descriptive information and digital objects they create and post online." He

proposed archivist-harvested web analytics to overcome this, rather than collaboration with librarians whose expertise in this area was begging to be leveraged.<sup>17</sup> It appeared that Bishoff's belief in speaking at cross-purposes was in full effect.

The thread underlying all of this is the age-old practice of siloing in the information profession. Robert Martin pled against its growth on behalf of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in 2003, emphasizing the IMLS's intention to bridge divides by fostering collaboration. "Digital information technology has dramatically affected the way we now perceive the differences and similarities of such institutions and have blurred the boundaries between them," he explained, concluding that although "now we see them as different...in the digital environment, the distinctions...are in fact artificial."<sup>18</sup> Soon after, at the 2005 Research Libraries Group (RLG) Members Forum, most of a day was spent exploring how to break apart silos, with participants arguing that collaboration would lead to the dissolution of widespread superficial differences.<sup>19</sup> In 2008 Diane Zorich, Gunter Waibel, and Ricky Erway produced a report for OCLC that surveyed a host of workshop participants, and determined that *how* the information arrived in patrons' hands was irrelevant to attendees.<sup>20</sup> It was Bishoff's common vision, rather than disciplinary expertise, that could unite the disciplines in a single practice.

Few more stern disagreements with all of these arguments have been written than Deanna Marcum's. In "Archives, Libraries, and Museums: Coming Back Together?" she asserts that all three fields lack "common standards for describing data...and cataloging holdings" and should "recognize that they serve different communities, make different assumptions about service" and have had different kinds of education."<sup>21</sup> Point by point, she reconstituted the rationale behind siloing, albeit without defending the

practice. Was she correct? Or was siloing the result of perceived or imagined differences, as Bishoff suspected?

The more pertinent question has become: does it matter? Despite the abstract scholarly back-and-forth, there have been an increasing number of libraries and archives producing successful digital collections. Monks-Leeson admitted that her collaborators were open to archival context as the "unifying representational principle for online collections."<sup>22</sup> They were listening to archivists, and archivists in turn were helping both sides to understand what tools were necessary to succeed. In that vein, Katherine Timms proposed "creating an integrated access system" to overcome perceived differences, but rather than fretting about cost, copyright, and other well-trod challenges, she emphasized archives' focus on aggregates of information objects rather than individual items. Understanding this perspective, which she saw as slightly different from librarians' understanding of digital items, brought her to propose an "information superstructure" capable of uniting librarians and archivists via a shared understanding of metadata.<sup>23</sup> Jody DeRidder, Amanda Presnell, and Kevin Walker, in an NHPRC grant-funded effort at the University of Alabama, devised just such a cross-departmental system to digitize materials and link them to archival finding aids. Just as Timms imagined, they did so by leveraging expertise across special collections, cataloging, and metadata services departments: "digital collection development is a cross-departmental effort, requiring shared goals, constant communication...and respect for one another's competing priorities."<sup>24</sup> Without collaboration, they would not have enjoyed any success.

Ten years ago, in an article surprisingly similar to "Context is Key," Nancy Chaffin Hunter, Kathleen Legg, and Beth Oehlerts – a project archivist, digital projects librarian, and metadata librarian – took on the task of digitizing and

placing online Colorado State University's University Historic Photograph Collection. Their initial differences – and there were many, ranging from “professional methodologies between libraries and archives (such as) the nature of materials collection, approaches to description and discovery, and definitions of access” – mangled their ability to communicate, much less collaborate.<sup>25</sup> Yet their project did not fail. They found a way through. This tale of discovered common ground is a message worth repeating, bucking the trend of the literature that repeatedly emphasized difference over commonality. While there is no one article, project, or discovery that can resolve this for all institutions and for all time, perhaps continued efforts, such as the following description of the collaboration at Texas Tech University's libraries, will put more steps behind us than in front.

### The Case

In the late 1990s the SWC and the university Library were brought under the same administrative roof after decades of independence. Not unexpectedly, there were occasional misalignments of institutional values, mission, and goals. The Library is at its core about providing access to information that is already organized and clean. The archives, on the other hand, is in the messy business of organizing the raw material that gets transformed into the articles and books that libraries later make accessible. While these statements were agreed upon by both parties, neither side came into the partnership clearly seeing potential nuances of the others' perspective. Nowhere was this more prevalent than in the creation and curation of digital collections.

The SWC had a history of working on digital collections in-house, such as the Austin Wiswall Papers, which had been scanned using basic scanning equipment, minimal to no image editing, and made available on the SWC website via HTML.<sup>26</sup> But the pace of scanning and coding the items was slow, compounded by a sudden

reduction in IT resources. The fledgling project had been forced to a standstill.

In response, Library administration decided to organize and consolidate digitization efforts under a different umbrella, creating the Digital Library Initiatives Team (DLIT) in 2004 composed of faculty and staff from various parts of the organization, including the archives, with a goal of digitizing larger portions of available collections. However, the rift in mission and goals between the archives and the Library led to the SWC's sudden removal from the TTU Libraries system in mid-2006.

During this new time outside the TTU Library system, the SWC adopted DSpace to host and make accessible its digital collections, chosen principally because it was the most familiar system to the SWC's IT staff, as well as its popularity as institutional repository (IR) software. The system also required minimal effort to design and activate; a requirement now that Library resources were no longer available. Unfortunately, the software was not ideal for archival collections, nor for some other types of digital collections, precisely because it had been built up to support the IR community.

In a digital asset management system for IRs such as DSpace, an “item” can be compared to a floating object that can be rearranged in relation to its peers based on an established need. It is created with the assumption that patrons will search for a topic on a mainstream search engine – most often Google – and then land on a DSpace page. Alternatively, they might search for authors and titles within the system itself. Once within the system, patrons can sort items by title, issue date, author/creator, or other criteria. This works well for IRs, where the papers are discrete pieces of information connected only by the author or the item's thematic DSpace “Community” or “Sub-Community.” Archival collections, however, are rigorously arranged

and described in intellectually-connected aggregations of disparate material. Individual leaves of paper, photographs, or other items do not exist as floating objects. The Herculean task of re-segregating and individually describing each physical item in even the smallest archival collection in order to create a digital version of the collection was untenable. SWC efforts were therefore few, and contained often minimal or poor metadata. Once again, work came to a standstill.

The Library, now bereft of archival materials, in 2008 turned toward digitizing TTU's large theses and dissertation collection. It pivoted from HTML websites to two different digital asset management systems, CONTENTdm and DSpace. Due to experiences that led TTU librarians to assert that CONTENTdm struggled to get data to search engines, the Libraries had in 2005 moved all of their digital collections to a locally-hosted DSpace instance, and immediately saw improvements in patron usage of their collections.<sup>27</sup> A short time later, the Library moved from the local DSpace instance to one hosted by the Texas Digital Library (TDL). This move provided the Library with a reliable and well-supported content management system that it soon filled with theses, dissertations, and various book projects.

By 2012 administrators had facilitated a reunion between the SWC and Library, albeit with no small measure of caution on both sides. In the interim, the Library had streamlined digitization project management from a Library-wide team to a dedicated Digital Resources Unit (DRU) headed by librarian Joy Perrin. Upon the two organizations' reunion, SWC manuscript archivist Robert Weaver was assigned to be the liaison between the SWC Manuscript Department and the DRU.<sup>28</sup> Through that intermediation, both groups agreed that digitization efforts could recommence, focusing on small, "marquee" collections – physical collections with demonstrated

researcher interest or that covered frequently researched topics – in order to establish a baseline workflow for future digital collaboration. From such small first steps it was hoped that the manuscript archivist and DRU librarians could bridge the repeatedly-widened institutional divide.

Two initial collections were selected. The first was the Austin Wiswall Papers, which, as noted earlier, had already been scanned and placed on the SWC's html-encoded primary website, and could therefore swiftly be added to the now-shared DSpace system by the Library's metadata librarian. The second collection was the United Confederate (Civil War) Veterans Records (UCV).<sup>29</sup> Both threw up unexpected roadblocks that were exacerbated by passing the project around between three of the Library's metadata specialists.

### The Roadblocks

At first, the collections were described the way that the DRU described book and image collections. Metadata was authored for each distinct piece of paper in a given archival collection, a level of description that went beyond what the archivists had, or would ever have, created using contemporary archival standards. The first metadata librarian created a modified Dublin Core schema to work with the DRU's model and began creating records, only to discover that the schema did not properly describe all parts of the collection. The metadata librarian redesigned the schema, and the work resumed until another item failed to fit the new schema. And so the process started over. It is now apparent that the repeated false starts stemmed from the DRU's incorrect assumptions about what an archival collection is, and how it is meant to be used.

The librarians were unaware of the truth that the archivists had learned during the separation, and which they neglected to communicate to the DRU: an item-level schema was inappropriate



because focusing on indexable access to each distinct physical archival item was an untenable proposition. For example, the DRU tried to describe every leaf of correspondence with the details of who had written it, to whom they had sent it, when they had sent it, and so forth, with the goal of ensuring that search engines would be better able to index the item. This goal was a direct result of an earlier Library study about how search engines interact with content management systems. This led to the supposition that the goal of all digitization projects was to make individual items discoverable through mainstream search engines.

The SWC, had it known about this assumption, might have challenged it. Archivists initially entered into the partnership with a focus on digitizing and publishing only “marquee” collections. They wanted to increase the discoverability and accessibility options for their existing academic research base. Generating items for the general public, however beneficial now in hindsight, was an ancillary effect at best, and ignored at worst. Hence the selection of the Confederate Service Records within the United Confederate (Civil War) Veterans Records (UCV). It had not only been used widely by genealogical researchers, but 2012 through 2015 – the years during which the collection would be scanned and published – coincided with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US Civil War.

As scanning and uploading moved forward, the project was transferred to another librarian, who was given the directive of focusing on uploading items more quickly using a simplified Dublin Core metadata schema. While the project began to speed up, the pace was still slow from the perspective of SWC archivists. Worse, the item-level metadata approach was producing items without contextual value. When the archivists interacted with the digital collection, they saw a random presentation of various pages pulled from an archival box, not a re-creation of the

physical materials’ alignment of physical arrangement and intellectual context. Despite repeated meetings, the librarians did not understand why the product, which had taken a lot of resources to create, was not satisfying expectations as had all of the Library’s other digital collection projects. To mitigate this, the SWC’s Technical Processing/Bibliographic Services unit – comprised primarily of cataloging faculty and staff – joined the efforts. They reviewed item records created by the DRU, found the breadth of metadata fell short of their own standards, and began to go back through the digital items to add further item-level detail in the hope that it would provide, through DSpace site searches, a mimicry of a physical collection’s organization.

The time investment required to create item-level descriptions, and having that description redone by SWC catalogers, inevitably bogged the process down. Although scanning had begun in early 2012, the DRU metadata librarians and SWC catalogers did not finish uploading and creating item level metadata for the UCV collection until mid-2013. By that time, the SWC had provided several other collections to the DRU, such as the American Civil Liberties Union (Lubbock Chapter) Records and the Bidal Aguero Papers.<sup>30</sup> Like the UCV Records, they represented topics of popular interest, respectively: political activism and civil liberties; and Latino history viewed through the life and career of a regionally prominent Latino politician, activist, and newspaper publisher. While these collections provided a wider picture of the SWC’s collecting scope and provided otherwise difficult-to-access materials to researchers, they were not as nationally significant as the UCV Records. Peppering small, easily-digitized and described archival collections such as these in among large-scale projects such as the UCV became the SWC’s de facto policy. The pace of description provided no room to do more. Little thought was given as yet to how the dissonance

in metadata philosophies might be reconciled beyond throwing more warm bodies at it.

At this point, therefore, the Library and SWC's relationship was less collaboration and more, at best, a cooperation in which the archive supplied materials for the Library to run through a digital collection pipeline, with both parties looking on dissatisfied. The librarians did not understand the archive's concerns, and the archivists did not understand the system enough to articulate a solution. And so for several years, those efforts continued unchanged.

### The Growth of a Collaboration

In January 2016 a small team of three librarians and two archivists convened on their own initiative to rethink the problem. Archivists described their collections' primary audience: academic researchers. Therefore digital collections should mimic the researcher experience in the SWC reading room, where a patron could sit down with a box and leaf through well-organized folders. It should also replicate the organization of the archival finding aid, since that was the primary method for researchers to navigate collections. Optimizing items for search engine indexing, once explained by the librarians, was in the SWC's view secondary to maintaining the organization that allowed researchers to make sense of archival material in context. They asked if, instead of treating each physical piece of paper as a digital object, the DRU could devise a method to treat the *archival folder* as the principal digital object.

Communication is the lynchpin of successful collaboration. And the simple question, asked only after nearly four years of hard work, opened the floodgates. The DRU proposed aggregating individually scanned items from folders into a single pdf. The SWC eagerly agreed to this experiment. To supplement this shift, an archivist and a metadata librarian would replicate archival finding aids in HTML on each DSpace

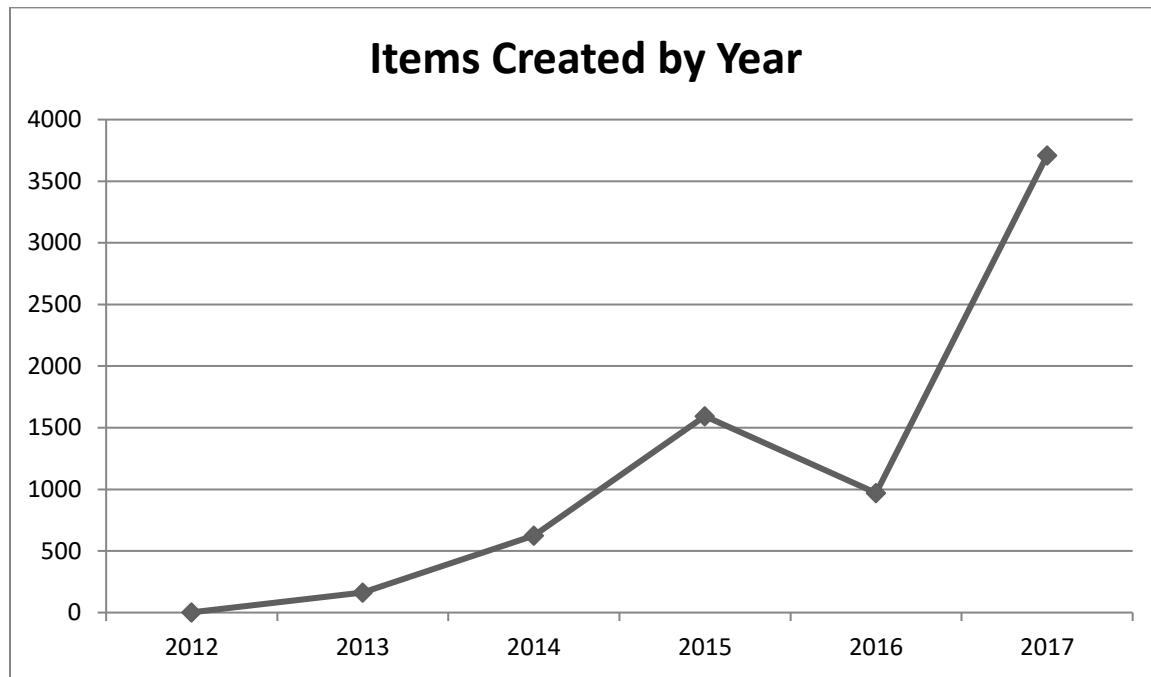
digital collection's page, including linking individual folders listed in this replica finding aid to their corresponding digital item's URI in hopes of creating a more intuitive user experience.

The group applied this approach to all new collections going forward, and also began revising the pre-existing, item-level digital collections to this standard. Metadata creation time improved because librarians were no longer creating a full Dublin Core metadata record for each item. They could, and still do, use the archive's collection-level metadata to describe each folder, irrespective of content. Archival context, always present in the finding aid, now flowed directly into the digital collection environment.<sup>31</sup> As an added enhancement, the SWC's Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding aids, available online as part of a statewide consortium called Texas Archival Resources Online (TARO), were re-coded so that each folder listed in the TARO finding aid connected to its digitized folder on SWC's DSpace.<sup>32</sup> Now, no matter whether a researcher discovers the SWC via TARO or DSpace, they have an identical user experience; one made possible only through years of false starts, miscommunication, and a collaborative breakthrough between professionals of varying expertise but, in hindsight, almost infinite patience.

Collections started moving swiftly through the new process. Figure 1 shows the total number of items created by year for the collection through December 2017. By 2019, the digital archive had grown to over fifty collections containing almost 15,000 archival folders. Highlights include Dr. Tetsuya 'Ted' Theodore Fujita's entire set of *Satellite and Mesometeorological Report Project (SMRP) Reports*, including those that first proposed the Fujita Scale, or F-scale, for measuring tornadic intensity; the massive Gertrude C. Suppe Hispanic Church Music Collection; the near-entirety of the League of Women Voters of Texas organizational records in anticipation of the upcoming centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment

to the US Constitution; and a complete survey of all able-bodied, Civil War-era men who were interred in Texas.<sup>33</sup> Each digitized collection is also linked to its counterpart finding aid on TARO.

**Figure 1. Count of total items created in different years for the SWC/SCL DSpace.**



### Lessons Learned

The quantity of digital collections and innovative methods the group developed to create them and make them discoverable, while invaluable, was not where the real success of this six-year odyssey lay. Clearly, the project would have progressed more smoothly had the Library and SWC first communicated clearly and at great length, identifying goals and researching desired and potential audiences before the first item was scanned. But there had long been friction between the Library and SWC, and while much of it was ancillary to the goals of this project’s participants it nonetheless defined their

ability to interact. And so librarians insisted upon their metadata and digital collection philosophies and experience. The revelation that they had unintentionally held the development of the collections back by holding on to goals and values from other digital collections projects shocked them into a broader perspective on digital collection management and, more importantly, collaborative practice in the information profession. The archivists were no less culpable, insisting that time-tested archival techniques that had only been applied to physical materials should translate one-to-one in the digital sphere.

Yet from the outset, both groups had assumed their goals were shared. Communication was nowhere present. For example, it was not until an absurd distance into the project that both the librarians and archivists realized that they had been using almost identical vocabulary, but with very different definitions. A librarian's digital "collection" was not like an archivist's physical collection of folders and boxes. Discrete "items," as understood by digital librarians using DSpace, infrequently correlated with archivists' understanding of an archival item and its robust intellectual context. Future projects will be more easily managed by creating a shared, living glossary identifying key terms for all parties and their possible translations across disciplines.

Early on, metadata librarians and SWC catalogers discovered that exceedingly thorough metadata cannot always account for the exigencies of a digitized archival collection's broader intellectual context. The archivists were slow to grasp the fluid nature of metadata philosophy, creation, and interpretation that was becoming ever-more obvious to other categories of information professionals. Simultaneously, they bemoaned DSpace's tenuous ability to accommodate visually the structure of physical archival collections, while at the same time forgetting the platform's capabilities for innovation, however limited. All ongoing and planned projects now include a thorough exploration of the capabilities of potential platforms with broad room to innovate within their boundaries.

To the credit of all of the project's collaborators, they accepted one of the most difficult truths a dedicated professional can face: the sunk cost fallacy. Many librarians and archivists, including the collaborators described here, struggle

and often fail to cast aside mountains of hard work, even once they know that further work in that vein might be detrimental to the project or institution. Scrapping earlier efforts makes those efforts feel irrelevant. But by setting aside pride to collaboratively stop and assess the untenable situation, then changing gears by reshuffling and combining thousands of digital items across dozens of DSpace subcommunities, these librarians and archivists discovered that those fears were groundless. Now, with both parties equipped to effectively collaborate, the benefits of these lessons are incalculable.

### Conclusion

Libraries and archives are finding common ground with digital libraries, making it ever more reasonable to collaborate and reduce costs by using shared resources. The Texas Digital Library DSpace Users Group recently held a special meeting where they asked how various groups in Texas were using DSpace for archival collections. Answers varied widely, but with large-scale digitization efforts from Google and others covering the typically more accessible base of library projects, questions such as TDL's suggest that the true value that digital libraries have may lie in digitizing the unique treasures that only archives hold. However, much work needs to be done before effective collaborations can truly happen. Everyone needs to understand their partners' philosophy and vocabulary. Everyone needs to agree to clear shared goals and direction. And most importantly, both sides should be willing to see things from others' perspective.

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<sup>1</sup>David B. Gracy II, "Welcome to the Premier Issue," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 41, no. 3

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<sup>2</sup>The Library of Congress, *The National Digital Library Program: A Library for All Americans* (The Library of Congress, February 1995), 5.

<sup>3</sup>Society of American Archivists (SAA), *Basic Principles for Managing Intellectual Property in the Digital Environment: An Archival Perspective* (August 1997), <http://www2.archivists.org/statements/basic-principles-for-managing-intellectual-property-in-the-digital-environment-an-archiva>

<sup>4</sup>Stephen E. Ostrow, *Digitizing Pictorial Collections for the Internet*, (Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), 1998), [www.clir.org/pubs/reports/ostrow/pub71.html](http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/ostrow/pub71.html)

<sup>5</sup>Dan Hazen, Jeffrey Horrell, and Jan Merrill-Oldham, *Selecting Research Collections for Digitization* (CLIR, 1998).

<sup>6</sup>Kristine R. Brancolini, "Selecting Research Collections for Digitization: Applying the Harvard Model," *Library Trends* 48, no. 4 (Spring 2000): 783-798.

<sup>7</sup>Andrew Hampson, "Managing a Digitisation Project," *Managing Information* 5, no. 10 (December 1998), 5, 25-32.

<sup>8</sup>Sarah Hamid, "Constructing a Global Time Capsule: Challenges in the Digital Preservation of Society's Cultural Memory Archive," *Information Technology and Libraries* 17 (1998), 207-211.

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<sup>17</sup>Christopher Prom, "Using Web Analytics to Improve Online Access to Archival Resources" *American Archivist* 74 no. 1 (2011): 158-184, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23079005>

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<sup>22</sup>Monks-Leeson, Archives on the internet, 38-39.

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<sup>24</sup>Jody DeRidder, Amanda Presnell, and Kevin Walker, "Leveraging Encoded Archival Description for Access to Digital Content: A Cost and Usability Analysis," *American Archivist* 75, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2012): 143-170.

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<sup>27</sup>Joy M. Perrin, "Lessons Learned: A Case Study in Digital Collection Missteps and Recovery," in

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<sup>29</sup>United Confederate (Civil War) Veteran Records, 1863-1967, SWC, <http://hdl.handle.net/10605/45428>

<sup>30</sup>American Civil Liberties Union, Lubbock Chapter, Records, 1963-1994 and undated, SWC, <http://hdl.handle.net/10605/255066>; Bidal Aguero Papers, 1949-1988 and undated, SWC, <http://hdl.handle.net/10605/89757>

<sup>31</sup>Matthew McEniry, "Digital Archiving DIY: EAD-XML Finding Aids Made Quickly (and Cheaply)," presentation at the Society of Southwest Archivists, Annual Meeting (May 2017).

<sup>32</sup>For an example, see the Bidal Aguero Papers; Robert G. Weaver, "Stick to the Script: Automated Creation of XML for EAD Finding Aids," *Journal of Archival Organization* 16, no.4 (Fall 2019): 163-177.

<sup>33</sup>All SWC digitized archival collections may be found at <https://swco-ir.tdl.org/>