How I Made This:
A Primer on Digitization Programs

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September 6, 2019
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Digitization as a Practice

- Why digitize? (What’s the problem?)
- Challenges
- Digital Production
- Providing Access
- How do we do better?

Sample Project: The Coyote Papers
Why Digitize? (What’s the Problem?)

Putting procedure into context

Existing Physical Collections
  +
Desire for access
  +
Existing technology (internet access)

= I know! I’ll just digitize it!
How hard can it be?

- Question *before* you start:
  - How to digitize?
  - Where are you gonna put the resulting files?
  - Files? Wait... *which* files?
  - How are your users going to find and to your files?
- Challenges scale with volume.
  - Answers to the above questions will differ for collections of 12 objects vs 12,000 objects.

However...

Common themes:
- A good foundation and planning offers potentially infinite extensibility.
- Digitize *once*.
- Platform-agnostic.
Digital Production

- Capture devices
  - Dependent on material type
  - Widely-varied price points
  - Still imaging vs. Time-Based Media
- Capture processes (Still imaging)
  - Contact/Minimal contact/Zero Contact
  - Scanning vs. Direct Capture
  - Sensor/optics performance
- Time-based media capture (Audiovisual)
  - Data storage and integrity
  - Signal chain
  - Real-time capture
(Finding and using your files)

- Researchers, curators, et al, just want access to the object. (Digital Surrogacy)
  - Minimizing layers of abstraction
  - Maintaining appropriate access rights
- Digital Asset Management Systems (DAMS)
  - CCDL uses OCLC’s CONTENTdm.
- Web viewers
  - Mirador/IIIF
  - 3d object display
- Digital Exhibitions
  - Omeka
Production Management

Team management

- Digitization is not a solo effort.
- Maintaining internal and external relationships.
- Facilitating the work of others.

Digital Preservation

- Planning for the future.
- What can we do to ensure that this work we are doing today is still useful in 200 years?
- Data loss prevention → robust, redundant data back-up policies (and regular validation!)
- Bit-rot prevention → Checksum Validation (SHA-1)
- Non-proprietary file formats and workflows.
- Platform agnostic.
Sample Project: The Coyote Papers

- A mix of material types
- Preservation issues
- Accession issues
- Rights/access issues
- Storage issues
Sample Project

The Coyote Papers

- The donor is a well-known public figure, and the materials are a personal collection from his life.
- Collection will be donated to the Claremont Colleges Library for research and preservation purposes. Digitization is one of the conditions under which donation will take place.
- Collection is currently located near Monument Valley, AZ.
- The donor would like to announce the digital collection to be made available online at an awards dinner in six months' time.
The Coyote Papers – Collection Review

- Contains written correspondence
- Annotated books
- Various Legal Proceedings
- 48 short episodes from a nature documentary, including unused footage
- Objects from Mr. Coyote’s life work
- Unpublished Memoir

- 1 archival box, condition varies
- 11 total oversize product catalogs, fragile
- 1 archival box, good condition (c. 1990)
- 48 BetacamSP tapes, some need minor cleaning, each episode 6-8 minutes

Objects include:
- Various bottles of bird seed
- Vintage anvil
- Rocket skates (1 pair)
- Jet bike (crashed)

- Zip Disk containing various MS Word documents and supporting digital files (JPGs, PDFs, a MySpace page, etc.)
The Coyote Papers - Still Imaging

Correspondence and Legal Documentation
- Minor conservation issues

Annotated Product Catalogs
- Fragility, rights issues

Object Photography
- Size/weight restrictions? (Anvil)
- Fragmentation (Crashed jet bike)
- Hazardous substances (Rocket skates)

Adjusting cost estimates based on additional handling and processing.
The Coyote Papers - Audiovisual

48 BetacamSP tapes
- Minor cleaning required

- Rights issues
  - Obtaining documentation and clearances from Warner Brothers documentary production company.
  - Viewable only on campus? Digital course reserves? Reading room use?
Zip Disks
- Recovery of data from obsolete media
- "Click of Death" possibilities
- Migration to more stable, archival formats
- Digital preservation of original digital materials (disk imaging).

How to best present materials created in obsolete or unsupported software environments?
The Coyote Papers – Additional Opportunities

- Digital Exhibits
- Learning Opportunities
  - Documenting experiences with new object types.
  - Adding to existing knowledge bases for familiar object types.
- Cross-disciplinary research
  - Film studies/Engineering
  - History/Software Development
- Data mining
Thank you for your time.

Any Questions?