SANDALL Winter Institute 2016
Digital Archives: Best Practices for Preserving Institutional Memory

Presentation Outline

I. It started with a roar
    A. To begin at the beginning, it started with a roar.
        a. Dr. Harry Wegeforth heard a lion from the 1915-16 Panama-California Exposition roar as he drove past Balboa Park with his brother. He turned to his brother in the car and said, "Wouldn't it be splendid if San Diego had a zoo! You know...I think I'll start one."
        b. He spoke to the editor of the San Diego Union, an article was published in the paper, and it developed from there.
    B. The San Diego Zoo is celebrating its Centennial this year with multiple events and activities.
        a. San Diego Zoo's Centennial Website: http://timeline.sandiegozoo100.org/category/beginnings/
        b. Interactive Timeline: http://timeline.sandiegozoo100.org/
            i. Click through the timeline to find the Zoo's history documented with images and the organization's story.
            ii. Sources of information
                1. Zoo Marketing Department has an image repository
                2. Primary source for information is San Diego Zoo Global Archives, which is part of the Library
                    a. Over the years, several books and hundreds of articles have been published

II. It started with an email or possibly a phone call
    A. We get questions all the time- Donors interested in the history and evolution of the organization, photos of artifacts plus documentation for Education department.
    B. Safari Park, any other milestone, anniversary creates a surge in archives requests
        a. Centennial has prompted an increase in requests from the archives:
            i. Marketing/Creative Services Centennial Book – San Diego Zoo: The First Century
                1. Two volume set, quite comprehensive & utilized our scrapbooks of clippings and other materials from archives.
            ii. Horticulture Department - Internal presentations & San Diego Horticultural Society presentation preparation
                1. Old maps, drawings and plans, magazine articles

III. The San Diego Zoo Centennial Exhibit: The Lore Behind the Roar
    A. Partnering with the San Diego History Center (SDHC) – providing venue and services
    B. Significant research conducted into the Zoo's history using the archives, in addition to interviewing multiple people in the organization
    C. Five galleries, each with a theme
    D. Exhibit 101: There are extensive legal agreements - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); multiple loan documents, one for each set of items
        i. Loan documents include replacement value assigned for all items. Documents and artifacts were appraised, as everything is insured. The scrapbooks came in at a very high value and selected pages were to be digitized
            1. Scrapbooks are a digitization priority. Very gentle handling is required.

IV. Digitization: We are in the planning phase
    A. Digitization – Why do you want to digitize and what?

    B. Why - Preservation – our most pressing need. Priorities are scrapbooks & older ZooNooz issues.
- i. Unique and a view into history through a unique lens or filter
    - 1. Zoo's history but also the City of San Diego's.
        - a. Aquarium Park plans at Star of India site, Depression era Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects in the Zoo, Victory Gardens to feed Zoo animals during WW II & the influx of industry and people the war brought into San Diego
          http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/93spring/warcomes.htm

    C. What – Size, format, condition? These can all impact your plan.

    D. Access – Significant time is spent searching through print materials, scanning and emailing in response to requests.
- i. Mediated search vs. giving your end-users direct access, empowering them to change the question as they find information, explore further
- ii. General interest – Researchers, the general public

V. Digitization – The how phase

    A. Funding – It all requires funding
- i. Initial phases of project - creation of digital files (labor, software, buying a server/ server space). Will you hire a vendor? Whether you hire or not, you need to determine some technical specifications. Either way, this will influence the budget if you are building from bottom up.
- ii. Recurring costs - servers! Will you be adding to the collection over time? What if one of your files gets corrupted and you have to go back to your master copy?

    B. Technology – Capture: scan or high quality photos? What are your technical specifications? OCR?

    C. Technology - Access, Retention & Preservation
- i. Database - how will your images be accessed & stored?   Where and how will you store your masters?

    D. Metadata - what standard will be used? Dublin Core something else? If OCR is not realistic, this is even more important.

    E. Project Management – Establish your timelines, define roles. This could be first, depending on your situation.
- i. Who will be the project manager? You or someone else on your team? Even if you're outsourcing, someone needs to make sure your vendor is on track.
- ii. Work your network to see if anyone needs PMP (Project Management Professional) hours: http://www.pmi.org/Certification.aspx
    - 1. You need at least 4,500 hours of project management experience to earn PMP certification. That's about two years of full time work!

VI. More on funding

    A. Grants - On your own or partner?
- i. We are partnering with the Balboa Park Online Collaborative & they have applied for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant - http://www.balboapark.org/bpoc
    - 1. Limited to scrapbooks – but we have 62 scrapbooks!
- ii. Grants are generally limited to non-profits but all types of organizations can partner.

    B. Vendors – Do you have vendors willing to collaborate or give you assistance in exchange for using your brand in a case study or success story? Or package it as part of your annual renewal negotiation?

    C. Volunteers – Help stretch your funding. For-profit alternative: internships - course credit, paid/unpaid

VII. Current state: We have some high-quality images of our scrapbooks from the San Diego History Center.

    A. Good example of how the plan can change:
- i. Size: SDHC has an Epson flatbed scanner. Our scrapbooks were too large. Not impossible BUT

        ii. Condition? Could they be damaged? E.g. newspapers – acid issues, following apart. Why WE skipped the large-format scanner approach

    B. Technology: Photographed on a copystand with a digital 35 mm camera. SDHC shot the files as large as possible with a Canon D5 and a 50 mm macro lens, in RAW format, in color.
- i. The file size in RAW was about 125 megabytes. Postproduction work included conversion to TIFF, 16 bit (still in color). [48 bit is considered archival]
- ii. The images were color corrected and the exposure was corrected.
  1. Due to the size of the pages the edges were closer to the lights and a little bit brighter than the center of the page.
- iii. About 35 total images from earlier years, selected as the most interesting and where they need gaps filled in the context of the exhibit

    C. Options:
- i. For a true preservation copy: flatbed scanning would produce a larger file and fewer exposure issues.
- ii. Photographing the pages with a medium or large format camera on a larger copy stand, positioning the items are further from the lights would also be a good option.

VIII.   Current Digitization Efforts
    A. ~35 archival quality scrapbook photo TIFF files from SDHC
    B. Our own scanner at San Diego Zoo Global Library & Archives:
- i. Currently we have 600 dpi maximum; 1200 dpi archival is considered archival. Screen size – our maximum is 17.5 x 11. 48 bit color is highest, which is the archival storage requirement.

    C. Digital files are created on demand, upon request. Usually it is the source of information to answer a question, but occasionally specific material is requested.
    D. No current consistency or guidelines in terms of scanning, naming conventions, no metadata
- i. We have a lot of work to do in this area
- ii. Improved processes and workflow could help seed a digitization project

IX.   What's next - prepare for potential NEH grant funding
    A. Learn as much as possible by attending events such as these!
    B. Explore additional partnerships and expansion of existing partnerships.

Resources:

Balboa Park Online Collaborative
Offers a wide range of technical services for nonprofit organizations, including digitization.

Northeast Document Conservation Center
First non-profit conservation center in the United States to specialize in the preservation of paper-based library and archival materials. Offers training and services.

 What You Need to Know About Starting a Digitization Project Workshop. Susanne Caro. January 20, 2016.

Contact Information:

Beth Autin
Associate Director – Library Services
San Diego Zoo Global
bautin@sandiegozoo.org | 760.747.8702 x5736