

The Reading Room

a journal of special collections



an open-access scholarly publication focusing on special collections in a variety of settings including libraries, museums, historical societies and corporate environments.

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Volume 2, Issue 1

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The Reading Room: A Journal of Special Collections is a scholarly journal committed to providing current research and relevant discussion of practices in a special collections library setting. The Reading Room seeks submissions from practitioners and students involved with working in special collections in museums, historical societies, corporate environments, public libraries and academic libraries. Topics may include exhibits, outreach, mentorship, donor relations, teaching, reference, technical and metadata skills, social media, "Lone Arrangers", management and digital humanities. The journal features single-blind, peer-reviewed research articles and case studies related to all aspects of current special collections work.

Journal credits

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Cover photo: View of the Booth Family Center for Special Collections and The Paul F. Betz Reading Room at Georgetown University Library. Architects: Bowie Gridley, Construction: Manhattan Construction. Image courtesy of Bowie Gridley Architects and Georgetown University Library.

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Editors Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the third issue of *The Reading Room: A Journal of Special Collections!* Our many thanks for your support and enthusiasm to provide an open access and scholarly forum for all those working in, or with, special collections.

In this issue, we're pleased to bring you five case studies that focus on recent projects completed in special collections environments that explore current challenges and issues facing our profession. As with all successful case studies, the experience of the authors presented here is extensible, from engagement with our stakeholders in collection development and management to how we train and apprentice the next generation of special collections librarians:

- » Peterson Brink, Mary Ellen Ducey and Elizabeth Lorang of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln discuss the responsibilities and ethical implications of placing a historically significant, yet highly controversial campus humor magazine from the early part of the 20th century online.
- » Erica Brown presents her work at Sheffield Hallam University (UK) where she engaged the public in the creating an archive of popular and “middle-brow” fiction published between 1900 and 1950.
- » Sarah M. Allison discusses the development and implications of a student employee training program at the University of California, Riverside Libraries Special Collections & Archives Department.
- » Wendy Pflug explores using surveys for assessment in uncovering back-logged, hidden archive and special collections materials.
- » Madeline Veitch shares her process of creating a zine library at the State University of New York at New Paltz, including her collaboration with students in the description, collection development, and outreach of the newly-formed collection.

As we continue to receive submissions, we are excited to see the innovation and leadership displayed by those working in special collections. Faculty, staff, and

students in this field share responsibility for all areas of operations in their department, which, while challenging, provides a unique viewpoint and opportunity in engaging users and testing new technologies. This issue represents this diversity of experience and perspective, and we hope subsequent issues continue to embody the range of work being done in special collections and connect practitioners with each other.

The editors wish to thank the almost 100 peer reviewers who generously contributed their expertise and time to this issue and the team at Scholastica and the UB Libraries, especially Kristopher Miller and Don Gramlich. We also extend our sincere thanks to all of the authors who submitted articles and to you, our readers.

We are actively seeking partners and contributors at *The Reading Room*, and we invite you to consider submitting an article or serving as a peer reviewer. Additionally, we are soliciting images, particularly of reading rooms, for our next cover. Images should be a minimum 300 dpi and 8" x 10" in size. This issue's cover image features the Booth Family Center for Special Collections and The Paul F. Betz Reading Room at Georgetown University Library. A special thank you to Katherine Thomas for sharing the photos of this newly constructed research facility.

Questions and comments are always welcome. Please send all inquiries to thereadingroomjournal@gmail.com.

Whether as an author, reviewer, researcher, or reader, we hope you enjoy this issue of *The Reading Room*.

In appreciation,



Molly Poremski
Editor-in-chief



Amy Vilz
Editor-in-chief



Marie Elia
Editor-in-chief

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The Case of the *Awgwan*: Considering Ethics of Digitization and Access for Archives

Peterson Brink, Mary Ellen Ducey, and Elizabeth Lorang, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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Abstract

As members of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) Libraries considered digitizing and presenting the campus humor magazine *Awgwan* online as part of efforts to chronicle the University’s history and invite study of these materials, questions emerged about the ethics and responsibility of placing the *Awgwan* online in a broadly accessible digital environment. Much of the magazine depended and traded upon negative and destructive depictions of women and people of color as a key part of its “humor.” What are our ethical obligations in treating such materials? This essay introduces and analyzes the *Awgwan*; considers the potential value in making the magazine broadly available electronically; and then explores some of the issues the magazine raises for practitioners in archives and special collections today, particularly as more institutions may consider placing similar materials from their collections online.

Keywords: ethics, digitization, archives and special collections

The Case of the *Awgwan*: Considering Ethics of Digitization and Access for Archives

Peterson Brink, Mary Ellen Ducey, and Elizabeth Lorang, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

In November 1921, the *Awgwan*, the campus humor magazine of the University of Nebraska warned its readers, “*Awgwan* is under the eye of a censor. In case we are able we will try to get over 2.75% with a kick in it. Watch *Awgwan*.” This short message to readers of the magazine raises key issues related to the *Awgwan* in the early twentieth century. Censorship, or the threat of censorship and of suspension, was a concern for *Awgwan* staff throughout the 1920s. In fact, the magazine was suspended twice during the decade, and news of similar fates for other campus humor magazines was not uncommon in the *Awgwan*. The warning also demonstrates the way in which the *Awgwan* traded on references to popular culture for its humor and cultural critique. In this case, the editors liken their own potential censorship to the prohibition of alcohol in the United States. The 2.75% threshold indicated the maximum amount of alcohol that could legally be in a beverage at the time. The *Awgwan* recognized that it faced a similar threshold: if it exceeded a certain measure of what was considered permissible, it faced restrictions. The editors also expressed their motive to exceed the threshold, however, pushing the boundaries of what was allowed.

Today, the *Awgwan* raises new “threshold” questions: As members of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) Libraries considered digitizing and presenting the magazine online as part of efforts to chronicle the University’s history and invite study of these materials, questions emerged about the ethics and responsibility of placing the *Awgwan* online in a broadly accessible

digital environment. Much of the magazine depended and traded upon negative and destructive depictions of women and people of color as a key part of its “humor.” What are our ethical obligations in treating such materials? This essay introduces and analyzes the *Awgwan*; considers the potential value in making the magazine broadly available electronically; and then explores some of the issues the magazine raises for practitioners in archives and special collections today, particularly as more institutions may consider placing similar materials from their collections online. In discussing these issues in relation to the *Awgwan* and within the context of other ethical considerations librarians and archivists face as they digitize and provide electronic access to collections, we recognize how this work may require us to decide between competing values, and we seek, ultimately, to advance the conversation around these topics.

The *Awgwan* first appeared on the University of Nebraska campus in 1913 and was part of a larger national trend of campus humor publications. The first university humor magazines in the United States emerged in the nineteenth century, at schools such as Yale and Harvard. From the end of the nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth, such magazines thrived on college campuses. The explosion of these magazines coincided with two other cultural phenomena: a growing demand for humor among the middle class and the emergence of the university as a site for socialization, the latter which cultural historian Wickberg (1998) identifies as a “general reconstruction of the American university and its purpose” (p. 129). In his analysis of American humor, Mintz (1990) includes the more than “150 college humor magazines [that] flourished” during the 1920s as one reason the decade was so remarkable for American humor (p. 162). College humor magazines, and their particular brand of humor, were at the height of popularity in the 1920s. That the *Awgwan* was twice suspended during this same decade may be no coincidence; some of the same features that made campus humor magazines flourish also made them controversial. *In Sex and the University: Celebrity, Controversy, and a Student Journalism Revolution*, for example, Reimold (2010) identifies campus humor magazines as “the earliest sexual provocateurs” (p. 14).

Despite their prevalence on college and university campuses in the United States, campus humor publications of the first half of the twentieth century have received little current scholarly treatment. Nearly thirty years ago, humor scholar Sloane (1987) identified the magazines as an area for research in the study of humor in the United States. According to Sloane, the history of these magazines is “a record of vitality—a chronicle of rambunctious invasions of sacrosanct territory in politics, social pretension, and sexual mores almost unrivalled in any

comparable literary genre” (p. 49-50). And yet, while there has been some discussion of national publications such as *College Humor* and *Life*, or of H. L. Mencken’s *American Mercury*—which can be seen as off-shoots of smaller, local campus humor magazines—the progenitors of these publications sit unexplored in university archives. Some of the magazines, such as the *Cornell Widow* and the famous *Harvard Lampoon*, have been featured in anniversary anthologies (Kaplan, 1973; Green, 1981), which include histories and overviews of the publications, but these reprintings feature little to no critical exploration or interpretation.

One challenge to the study of campus humor magazines is the accessibility of the materials. The publications were cheaply produced and ephemeral. They are not widely available today, particularly in complete or nearly complete sets and when compared to the accessibility of national humor magazines. University archives and special collections may provide one of few points of access. Therefore, in order to encourage study and analysis of the *Awgwan* as part of campus and college life in the early twentieth century, of middle class culture, and of humor studies, we set out to digitize and make broadly available issues of the *Awgwan*. In the course of this work, however, we realized that the digitization and publication strategy developed for other materials in the UNL University Archives is not sufficient for dealing with the *Awgwan* and its subject matter.

The Awgwan

Students associated with the college of journalism, fine arts, and general campus activities at the University of Nebraska developed the idea for their own campus humor magazine during the 1912–1913 academic year. The students had great ambition for the magazine, which they titled *Awgwan*. (To understand the title, imagine a student hearing an unlikely story from a friend. In disbelief the listener says, as an aside, “aw, go on—aw gwan—awgwan.”) The purpose of the *Awgwan* was to provide an antidote to the more news-driven options available for reading on campus. At the University of Nebraska, the *Daily Nebraskan* published a range of news stories, a campus calendar, reviews of activities, and sports articles. It mirrored standard daily newspapers but with the campus at its center. Over the years, several other publications had emerged to supplement options for news and entertainment. An early humor magazine, *The Arrowhead*, was established in 1899 and was published monthly until 1902. Student annuals, which began publication in 1881, had humor sections that were similar to the *Awgwan* and *Arrowhead*. For example, the 1912 annual included a humor section called “College

Life.” With these earlier publications and efforts as a backdrop, the *Awgwan* eventually became the longest running stand-alone humor publication at the University of Nebraska and represents more than three decades of student life on the campus.

Students published the first *Awgwan* on February 17, 1913, and meant it to be a semi-monthly endeavor. The first editorial, by editor Chandler Trimble, provided an outline of *Awgwan* policy: the magazine would focus on Nebraska, as Trimble believed students should be aware of the state beyond the university. He further noted that the articles would not always be to everyone’s liking and that the editors “expect a long line of subscribers after each issue to come to our office door and demand that we refund their money and stop their subscription to this scurrilous sheet” (p. 12). Indeed, the *Awgwan* had a tumultuous run on campus due to its content and to other campus publications created by its editors and staff. Publication of the *Awgwan* was suspended twice, once in 1923-1924, and again in 1929 (*The 1934 Cornhusker*, p. 96; *The 1935 Cornhusker*, p. 108). After resuming publication in 1931, the *Awgwan* continued until 1941. In 1941, it drastically changed its style and format, highlighting campus life through photographs. This change in format lasted for about five years, with the final published copy of the *Awgwan* appearing in December 1946.

Throughout these three decades, the creation and publication of the *Awgwan* resided in the hands of students. They initiated the original idea and operated the publication with a formal editorial board. Leadership positions such as editor, editor-in-chief, and business manager were often held by the same student for several years. Student staff were assigned to a position for a semester or entire year, and students often played multiple roles. Eventually, supervision of the publication of the *Awgwan* fell to a professional journalism fraternity, Sigma Delta Chi (SDC), which was based at the University. Even with this change in leadership the majority of content still came from the students (*The 1918 Cornhusker*, p. 310).

Student volunteers in positions of editors and contributors supervised the development of the periodical and solicited content from the student population on campus. Contributors-at-large were encouraged to contribute to the magazine through direct requests that appeared on the editorial pages, advertisements, and invitations published elsewhere. Much of the editorial content appears without a byline, but cartoons and other graphical contributions include the name of the artist. The majority of cartoon contributions, particularly editorial cartoons and general illustration cartoons, were created by University of Nebraska students on the *Awgwan* staff. The *Awgwan* also reprinted material from

a wide variety of student humor magazines published at other universities and colleges. These materials were incorporated into the *Awgwan* through sections with titles such as “Encore Numbers,” “Curtain Calls,” “Rescued From the Waste Basket,” and “Hand Me Downs.” Some issues were comprised entirely of content from other campus humor magazines. The *Awgwan* therefore also provides glimpses into the social and academic humor of other colleges and universities. In just two issues from 1920, for example, the *Awgwan* included material from the *Yale Record*, *University of California Pelican*, *Jack-o-Lantern*, *Chaparral*, *Columbia University Jester*, *Carolina Tar Baby*, and *Lehigh Burr*, among others (*Awgwan*, February 1920, p. 18; *Awgwan*, March 1920, p. 18).

University of Nebraska students were the primary audience for the *Awgwan*, and its editors sought to explore student life and express opinions about all aspects of the University. Certainly humor is one dimension of the *Awgwan*. Another is the position of privilege its creators and readers enjoyed as students in a university environment and as participants in the college experience. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the nation’s population increased by 75%. At the same time, attendance at U.S. colleges and universities increased an astounding 400% (Levine, 1986, p. 68). The 1920 census revealed that the United States had moved from a rural to an urban nation. Cities had become the focus of economic, social, and intellectual growth leading to the rise of middle class urban professions, and these changes enhanced the prestige of a college degree (p. 69). As this culture of aspiration flourished in the 1920s, many also looked to college as a way to develop social contacts—even at the expense of the intellectual experience (Knoll, 1995, p. 75).

The amount and content of advertising in the *Awgwan* is one indication of this privileged audience. In addition to the clothing ads that appear in every issue, featuring the latest fashions for both men and women, advertisements encouraged students to purchase candies and chocolates, pens, stationery, typewriters, watches, and tobacco products. One advertisement for men’s clothes told would-be buyers: “They’re made to fit the mind, manner and figure of Smart-Dreessing [sic] Fellows, their Value Scurries up – up – up Continually; it Teases attention constantly” (*Awgwan*, November 1921, p. 15). At the same time, students were bombarded by ads for bakeries, cafeterias, diners and grocers, barber and beauty shops, bookstores, cleaners, dance classes, jewelers and opticians, pharmacies, portrait studios, printers and engravers, and tailors. Advertisements such as these bring into focus certain aspects of student life and the construction of the college experience in the early twentieth century. The editorial and artistic content of the magazine brings other aspects of campus life into focus as well—and makes the attention to

status through material goods and commodities appear innocuous in contrast.

In particular, the magazine's depiction of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, and of women or qualities gendered as feminine, demonstrate that the University of Nebraska college experience of the early twentieth century was a construct defined as white, western, "masculine," and Christian. Now, well into the second decade of the twenty-first century, as colleges and universities confront compliance with Title IX and with systemic racism and civil rights issues on our campuses, what responsibilities do universities and their archival repositories have in making available parts of our institutional histories—such as the *Awgwan*? On the one hand, such materials and histories are poised to play important roles in understanding cultural phenomena such as humor magazines and the role of humor more generally and in developing understanding of the complicated histories of higher education in the United States. Furthermore, it is important that institutions recognize these problematic histories and that we do not put forward only a positive face in the materials we make broadly available. On the other hand, the presentation of such materials makes immediately available materials of textual and visual violence which, particularly when shorn of contextualization and analysis, perpetuate the very systems we aspire to replace.

Beginning with its mascot, the *Awgwan* both traded on and benefited from racial and ethnic stereotypes. The first mascot of the *Awgwan* was the figure of an American Indian baby, shown without clothes, wearing a headdress and swinging a hatchet. After a year, the mascot became the figure of an American Indian adult male, depicted with a hatchet and holding flowers. In 1914, the mascot was again an American Indian child, in diapers and moccasins, holding paper and a pipe, while standing next to a feathered helmet and a quill in ink. The *Awgwan* mascot was the most visible, but certainly not the only attempt at rendering and describing American Indians in the magazine. Other examples—among dozens—include the use of the term "red skin" and a definition for Powhatan that references alcohol (*Awgwan*, October 1920, p. 17).

Black Americans were the target of this harmful humor as well. Many illustrations depict characters in blackface, exaggerate physical features, and frequently use "dialect" in dialogue and captions for Black individuals. Writers and artists frequently used dehumanizing words and terminology to reference Black men and women. Further, cartoons and jokes in the *Awgwan* depend on familiarity with Jim Crow laws and related social practices, and many jokes assume a universal preference for whiteness in order for their "humor" to "work." A cartoon drawing titled "Try Our New Complexion Clay" shows before and after instances with "before"

a profile of a man in blackface and the “after” a profile of a white man (*Awgwan*, November 1924, p. 18). A number of jokes from the mid-1920s center on the Ku Klux Klan and lynching (*Awgwan*, May 1925, p. 12; *Awgwan*, November 1925, p. 4). Additional content, sometimes called annual jokes, referenced Italian, German, Spanish, and Chinese stereotypes for their humor. For example, the *Awgwan* touted its “Annual Chinese Joke.” Some of this content was original, and some pieces were reprinted from other campus humor magazines. The January 1927 exchange number, for example, included cartoons depicting Sitting Bull and two men in blackface, taken from other universities’ publications (p. 22, 30). The magazine also reused artwork in a more subtle assertion about ethnic and religious identity. For example, an image from a cartoon in a December 1925 issue, ostensibly depicting two Muslim men, is reused the following month for another cartoon about Muslims. This reuse of imagery is a subtle but powerful expression about the sameness and interchangeableness of Muslim identities.

Women’s bodies and minds were similarly seen as fair game by *Awgwan* contributors. Throughout the 1920s, *Awgwan* content relating to women focused on appearance, intelligence, dating, relationships, finances, and attitudes towards women as students or “co-eds.” Many of the jokes about women revolve around their looks, weight, and attire (*Awgwan*, November 1924, p. 8). The many jokes on the length of women’s dresses were really expressions of sexuality, and what was seen as appropriate for men and women. The May 1921 issue, for example, celebrated that “Skirts are now so short that a man doesn’t have to deform himself by bending when he wants to enjoy the views along the street,” while another joke, a conversation between a freshman and sophomore, shows appreciation for apparel that “protects private property, and yet doesn’t spoil the view” (p. 13). In addition, a number of the jokes from this period depend on apparent violence toward women only to have the punchline demonstrate that it was not a woman that was being beaten, choked, or murdered, but an object such as a bottle of alcohol. Perhaps in an attempt to address the representation of women and to provide an avenue for their voices, one issue ostensibly served as a response to the way the magazine presented women in earlier numbers. The “Sweet Mama” number (March 1923) was “written and edited by University girls, under the direction of Carolyn Airy, associate editor of the *Awgwan*” (p. 1). Regardless of this distinction in contributors and editors, the contents of this volume are very much of a piece with earlier numbers, demonstrating how ingrained these social attitudes were.

For the majority of its publication, little documentation exists to show how students, faculty, and the administration regarded the *Awgwan*. For the most part, the content of the *Awgwan* went unchallenged, even when they appeared to “get over 2.75% with a kick in it.” The magazine had two gaps in publication, however, one in 1923–1924 and another in 1929. While no extant documentation points to the precise reasons for what later *Cornhusker* yearbooks called “suspensions,” the *Awgwan*’s content appears to have been at issue, as well as its relationship to other humor publications and student groups (*The 1934 Cornhusker*, p. 96; *The 1935 Cornhusker*, p. 108). In February 1923, for example, the same student fraternity that oversaw publication of the *Awgwan* produced its annual four page paper, the *Evening Shun*, as part of University Night, a student-sponsored social event. Leading up to the 1923 *Shun*, student publishers met with university administrators and faculty to make clear they would publish the *Shun* only if they could do so without censorship. Administrators agreed, and the students delivered the *Shun* for University Night on February 17, 1923. The publication featured commentary on students, faculty, athletics, Greek life, and campus activities. It mentioned students by name, and focused on issues of appearance, intelligence, relationships, and dating.

The response to the 1923 *Shun* was damning: the Pan-Hellenic Council, representing 16 Nebraska sororities, rebuked it for its “attacks on women students,” its “vulgarity,” and its “slurs on the morality of women students” (Avery, 1923, Feb. 21). Meanwhile, Harold F. Holtz, Secretary of the Alumni Association, wrote to Chancellor Samuel Avery and declared that neither University Night nor the *Shun* represented “the things which the University of Nebraska stands for. It does not seem to me that the *Evening Shun* in its present form contributes one iota to the fun or jollity of the occasion, nor does it seem to me that such activity on the part of Sigma Delta Chi should be longer permitted” (Holtz, 1923, Feb. 20). Holtz continued, “I can see no reason why a publication which is essentially libelous in character and which is particularly offensive to anyone who has a great amount of respect for womanhood, should be allowed to appear again.” Others also condemned the *Shun* for its depiction of the “moral character” of women students at the University (Farnam, 1923, Feb. 17). As a result, the February 1923 issue marked the last publication of the *Shun*, and four years later, University Night itself was abolished.

The formal announcement from Sigma Delta Chi, the fraternity that published the *Shun*, announcing the end of the *Shun* appeared in March 1923. Two months later, in May 1923, the final issue of the *Awgwan* appeared, before an apparent 18-month break in publication.¹ There is not enough evidence to claim that the *Shun* incident was directly related to this hiatus in publication for the *Awgwan*, but the timing and other

1. We have not been able to locate issues of the *Awgwan* for the 1923–1924 academic year. Later Nebraska yearbooks refer to a suspension of the *Awgwan* in 1924. If issues exist from August–December of 1923, there do not appear to be extant copies. In any case, there was an extended hiatus for the magazine, for as little as one year and as much as eighteen months.

similarities are suggestive. The *Shun* was published by the same fraternity that oversaw publication of the *Awgwan*, and the criticisms of the *Shun* highlight key issues that also would have been at stake for the *Awgwan*. Notably, the criticisms of the *Shun* focused on its representation of the moral character of women in the student body. These criticisms did not take to task the problematic representations of women from a feminist perspective but rather were critical of the *Shun*'s implications that university women did not behave appropriately. At the same time, the final issue of *Awgwan* prior to its hiatus acknowledges support from students and faculty: "The students and alumni have backed the magazine to the limit and have been consistent boosters. The relations of the faculty, too, have been very gratifying" (*Awgwan*, May 1923, p. 9). The *Awgwan*'s publication gap during the 1923–1934 academic year remains a bit of a mystery, but its timing and the magazine's connection to the *Shun* provide at least a glimpse into what the reaction to the *Awgwan* and its content may have been on the campus.

The *Awgwan* resumed publication in November 1925. On the surface, little appears to have changed with the publication, though it made rhetorical gestures over time that suggest it was aware of the perpetual "threshold" it was up against. In March 1927, for example, the editors wrote, "we plan to run no scandal sheet. Nothing will ever be printed that is meant as slander. Nothing will be found in our columns that suggest immorality" (*Awgwan*, March 1927, p. 9). Such statements, however, did not apply to the magazine's presentation of racial and ethnic minorities, nor to its presentation of many women's-related topics. In fact, very little seems to have changed in the *Awgwan* despite this proclamation, and the magazine ran without major interruption until 1929. In 1929, however, an unknown controversy again brought the magazine to a halt. Neither the *Awgwan* itself nor university administrative records indicate the exact situation that shuttered the *Awgwan*, but various resources hint at the underlying reasons. The *Cornhusker* yearbook references the suspension, indicating that the Student Publications Board abolished the magazine due to "alleged obscenity," while the *Daily Nebraskan* described the suspension as the result of "questionable material" (*The 1930 Cornhusker*, p. 110; *Daily Nebraskan*, November 26, 1929, p. 110–111). A year later, in November 1930, Sigma Delta Chi sought to reestablish the *Awgwan*. They made several assurances, if their request was approved: they would secure subscriptions, secure advertising, and "recruit a sufficient number of responsible, capable applicants for staff positions" (*Daily Nebraskan*, November 13, 1930). The Student Publication Board was in favor of the *Awgwan*'s return, if it was on sound financial footing (*Daily Nebraskan*, November 20, 1930). Three months later, in February 1931, the *Awgwan* again appeared on the University of Nebraska campus with the sponsorship of Sigma Delta Chi. The magazine continued publication until 1941, at which time it was dramatically reinvented to focus on a photographic representation of campus life. The final issue of this new *Awgwan* appeared in December 1946.

The Bigger Picture

Regardless of how its contemporaries viewed the *Awgwan*, and how much of the material its original audiences found either innocuous or objectionable and why, we recognize much of the magazine's content today as racist, sexist, xenophobic, classist, and participatory in maintaining power structures that benefitted a select few and oppressed many more. While these qualities make the magazine deplorable on many counts, it nonetheless has value for research—in some cases because of these very issues with the magazine. There are, then, important reasons for making sure it is available for study: it has value for humor studies—including studies of the ways in which humor has served oppression, or made oppression more palatable to dominant cultures or to those in power—for histories of American magazines, for understanding the functions and dysfunctions of higher education in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, and, more locally, to both broader and deeper understanding of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, among other possible research angles. As a result, a complete run of the *Awgwan* is preserved and made available in physical form on site in the reading room and has been for decades, similar to other equivalent publications at other institutions and archival repositories.

Recognizing its research value and as part of larger initiatives to digitize the history of the institution, we recently set out to provide digital public access to the materials, with the goal of encouraging broader research use of the *Awgwan*. We began digitizing the *Awgwan*, and in the process examined the magazine in more detail than we had opportunity to do in the past. The work of digitizing, in which we manually turned pages and oriented the magazine for each overhead scan, led us to see, at scale, the magazine's prejudices, biases, and oppressive and destructive rhetoric—both textual and visual. As we digitized issues and discussed what we read and observed, we became increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of making widely publicly available digital content full of such messages, which could be easily and broadly circulated via the Internet either without context or with ahistorical context.

There perhaps appears a tension in our reluctance, a tension between values of access and the role of archives—to provide access to the historical record without regard to content—and our desire to create some barriers to the circulation of the *Awgwan*'s pernicious messages, particularly those messages shorn of context. The idea of providing access to the historical record without regard to content, however, may be more easily adopted within the environment of the in-person reading room, where there are inherently barriers to access as well as various points at which researchers must pause and think. As Dalglish (2011) puts it,

In the pre-Internet days, the fact that a collection was, in the legal sense, available to any member of the public did not mean that it was in fact easily accessible by all the public. There were physical barriers to access such as the location of the archives, the retrieval process, the willingness and skill of the archivist, and the perseverance and knowledge of the researcher. There were exceptions, such as exhibitions and published collections of archival material. However, for the most part archives were accessible only within the archival institutions. (p. 70)

Furthermore, in the reading room model, there are pause points in place, such as reading research rules, registering, requesting materials, and seeking permission to publish. Barriers to entry (such as the financial cost of travel) and these administrative processes can make the use of archives impossible or inconvenient enough to discourage all but the most serious researchers. While these barriers were not necessarily constructed to limit certain types of use, limitations to use certainly emerged as a consequence.

Public digital access is intended in part to diminish these and other access barriers, including those emerging out of financial, information privacy, and other concerns. For many intents and purposes, public digital access is a very good development, but we must also think critically about ethical implications and professional values beyond only widespread access. The paramount question, according to Dalglish, is “whether we can in theory make available online any and all materials which we can legally make available in our public reading rooms, and if not, why not, and on what basis do we limit access to material online which we would make available in our reading rooms” (p. 72). Dalglish identifies two particular ethical dilemmas for archivists in making materials available online: privacy and “inappropriate material” (p. 73). Even in cases where an archive would be within its legal rights to make certain materials available online, would it be violating ethical norms with regard to privacy, for example?

On the issue of privacy, Robertson’s (2016) recent response to Reveal Digital’s digitization of the lesbian porn magazine *On Our Backs* (1984–2004) shows why privacy considerations might impact librarians’ and archivists’ decisions about making material available online, even if there are no legal barriers to doing so. In the case of *On Our Backs*, Robertson argues that consenting to appear in a print magazine is not the same as consenting to have your photos appear online (n.p.). Furthermore, the fact that the first decade of *On Our Backs* predated widespread use of the Internet--to say nothing of the twenty-first-century world wide web and related technologies--means that there could have been no expectation or assumption on the part of the photographic subjects that their images would circulate freely

and widely in the way that inclusion on Reveal Digital's site now facilitates (Robertson, n.p.). Are Reveal Digital and holding institutions within their legal rights to make the materials available? The answer seems to be yes, but we can and should question whether they are acting responsibly and ethically.

To Dagleish's dilemmas, we also would add the ethical considerations at play in digitizing and making accessible materials for which there are extra-legal ownership issues. In this regard, there has been some sustained discussion and action surrounding ethics of digital access of Indigenous cultural heritage materials. Writing in the *Journal of Western Archives*, Kimberly Christen (2015) writes, "The colonial collecting project was a destructive mechanism by which Indigenous cultural materials were removed from communities and detached from local knowledge systems. Much of this material remains today not only physically distant from local communities, but also lodged within a legal system that steadfastly refuses local claims to stewardship of these materials" (p. 2). As archivists and others begin thinking about digitizing these materials, they must be aware that digitizing and providing for access and use has the potential to become the most recent act of colonization. Christen and others have argued that blind adherence to the ethos of the current open access movement privileges a predominantly white and Western perspective on intellectual property over the knowledge and cultural practices of the creators (Christen 2015; Genovese, T. R. 2016). This situation led Christen and other team members to develop both the Mukurtu content management system (mukurtu.org), which "allows [Indigenous] communities to define levels of access to and and circulation of their digital heritage materials" (p. 5), and the *Local Contexts* project (localcontexts.org). *Local Contexts* supports Indigenous communities in managing their cultural heritage within digital systems and digital culture, and it offers educational and technical resources. One of its projects is Traditional Knowledge (TK) labels, a mechanism that allows "Native, First Nations, Aboriginal and Indigenous communities to add existing local protocols for access and use to recorded cultural heritage that is digitally circulating outside community contexts" (localcontexts.org tk-labels). For users outside these communities, visible TK labels offer an "educative and informational strategy" for learning about ownership, sharing, and access practices, and the many local contexts that inform the circulation of Indigenous cultural heritage materials.

While these concerns related to Indigenous materials, as well as the *On Our Backs* example, are significantly different than those involved in public digital access to the *Awgwan*, they begin to demonstrate the range of ethical considerations, particularly with regard to privacy and to ideas of ownership, in digitizing and making openly accessible archival collections and holdings. Dagleish identified also an ethical dilemma related to what he calls "inappropriate" or "unacceptable" content. For Dagleish, this is "material that might offend, distress or concern members of the community who have no direct

connection with the material” (p. 73) and material that “may . . . be perceived as distasteful” (p. 77). Of course, all of these terms—“inappropriate,” “unacceptable,” “distressing,” “concerning,” “distasteful”—represent subjective measures. The types of materials that raised questions of propriety and acceptability among Dalglish’s colleagues were those that document, either textually or visually, human nudity, dead bodies and dismembered body parts, sexual acts, and deaths and accidents (p. 78). Similarly, in a 2013 article on digitizing the student publication *Salient* at Victoria University Wellington, Sullivan identified images of “graphic violence, death, and nudity” as the impetus for questions about “what is appropriate to display online and what will offend researchers.” These discussions suggest that it is documentary, graphic depictions of the human body and its physicality that are at the core of what users and others might deem “inappropriate.” With the *Awgwan*, we confront a different range of issues: the material is signifying rather than documentary, art rather than—or as well as—record, and the depicted bodies and minds are not those of real human beings. Nonetheless, in thinking about making the *Awgwan* publicly available online, the question that has emerged for us as key is: should the magazine’s systemic racism, sexism, and other systems of oppression affect how we make the materials available online, and if so, how?

Archives & Special Collections and affiliated initiatives at UNL have faced similar concerns with other digitization projects, including with the online access and crowdsourcing of University of Nebraska yearbooks (yearbooks.unl.edu) and *Civil War Washington* (civilwardc.org).² In the case of the yearbooks, the FAQ page includes a question about offensive materials and what readers should do if they find such material. The response cautions, “Materials in the transcription project are historical. As such, they may contain racial or sexual stereotypes that are inappropriate by today’s standards. They have been retained in order to fully represent the materials in their original context. If the offensive text is not in the original but occurred during the transcription process, please email us” (n.d., n.p.). UNL archivists and other members of the project team determined that this was an appropriate strategy because the majority of content in the yearbooks did not feature highly problematic depictions of racial and ethnic minorities or of women. In the case of *Civil War Washington*, project directors added a disclaimer to one section of the site, which features medical and surgical cases from the Civil War. In this cases, the materials fall under the category of potentially objectionable items dealing with human bodies identified in Dalglish. On the index of these cases, the disclaimer reads, “This section contains graphic descriptions and images of war injuries. Users are advised that they may find some of this material disturbing” (Lawrence, Lorang, Price, and Winkle, n.d., n.p.). Both of these statements are articulated once, on single pages of their

2. Authors of this essay have contributed to and directed Nebraska Yearbooks and *Civil War Washington*.

sites, and simply announce that users may find material problematic.

Certainly one approach to presenting the *Awgwan* online would have been to follow this model; however, we identified two problems with this approach in this particular cases. First, a single message articulated once on sites with thousands of items and pages provides no guarantee—or even a reasonable expectation—that people will see the message. Certainly, the message could be repeated on every page, but our second problem with this overall approach is that a disclaiming message is the wrong rhetorical strategy, because it emerges out of pseudo-legal impetus rather than ethical or educative concerns. Our goal is not to cover our bases, but rather to make the materials broadly available online in an ethically responsible fashion. At this time, we believe doing so requires both context and teaching, not only access. Therefore, our own decision at this point is not to make the *Awgwan* available online until we can provide important contextual and teaching materials. Certainly, the act of deliberately not releasing this material, which from a technical perspective is largely ready to go, makes us uncomfortable. But, providing access stripped of context and critical engagement makes us equally uncomfortable, if not more, so. To be clear, this decision is not made in any way with the idea of protecting our institutional history but emerges out of our concern that we not facilitate the work of oppression by elevating voices and ideas such as those from the *Awgwan* in an uninformed, uncritical, and decontextualized environment. Exactly what an informed, critical, contextualized environment would look like for the *Awgwan* is not something we have pursued in earnest, in part because we are now also grappling with whether to spend the limited amount of time we have for creating digital collections on the *Awgwan*.

This situation has prompted us to do some soul searching and to confront issues that are not easy or pleasant, but neither is history nor the documentation of that history easy or pleasant. Ultimately, we aspire to an access model that honors the archival mission and the value of historical records, but we also recognize that archives are not apolitical, and archival acts and information processes are not neutral. For a magazine that was consistently pushing against the threshold of what was permissible and raised concerns of censorship in its own time, we want to be attune to such issues today. We also, however, want to think critically about the voices we amplify in our digital collections, particularly given the ways in which digital materials circulate and also with attention to the voices that have historically been silenced—whether silenced in relation to the records that were created and kept or in how those records have been curated and the degree to which they have been made findable. By talking openly about the *Awgwan*, the tensions in treating the magazine, and our intentions—original and current—we hope to prompt further, continued conversation about the range of ethical considerations, and ethical obligations, in digitizing archival materials.

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Building a Special Collection of Popular and Middlebrow Fiction, 1900-1950

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Abstract

In 2011, Sheffield Hallam University, UK, launched an archive of popular and “middlebrow” fiction published between 1900 and 1950. This article will describe the innovative practices developed at the university to collect, research, and catalog the novels, and how members of the public have been actively involved in these processes. As well as producing significant scholarly outputs, this project formed an innovative Impact Case Study for submission to the Research Excellence Framework in 2014. This system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions requires departments to demonstrate the impact their research has had outside academia.

Keywords: popular fiction, middlebrow, literary history, twentieth century, public engagement

Building a Special Collection of Popular and Middlebrow Fiction, 1900-1950

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The Readerships and Literary Cultures 1900-1950 Special Collection at Sheffield Hallam University is a unique resource. Popular novels of the period are rarely preserved systematically in the UK; our university libraries have never collected this type of fiction, while public libraries regularly disposed of such books once they fell out of fashion. Works by individual popular authors are sometimes preserved in special collections, usually in the city associated with the author, such as the J. B. Priestley collection at the University of Bradford, but the Sheffield Hallam collection brings together the disparate popular and middlebrow fiction from the period, reflecting the wide range of literary tastes. It includes over 1,250 novels by 351 authors, ranging from those who have been remembered and reprinted, such as Elizabeth von Arnim and John Buchan, to those who have been almost entirely forgotten, such as Warwick Deeping, W. Riley and Elinor Mordaunt.¹ As many of these authors died relatively recently, (less than 70 years ago), their works remain in copyright and will not be digitized for many years. Out-of-print, their works are therefore in danger of being lost. In addition to the novels, there is a small collection of non-fiction: biographies, histories of publishing houses, and contemporary literary criticism, which inform our understanding of literary culture of this period.

Popular and Middlebrow Fiction

The scholarly rationale for the collection grew out of the work of the *Middlebrow* Network, a transatlantic interdisciplinary research network funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.² The network provides a focus for research into the disreputable term middlebrow and the areas of cultural production it purports to represent. Middlebrow

1. A full list of contents is available at www.middlebrow-network.com/SpecialCollection.aspx.

2. See www.middlebrow-network.com. There are currently 337 subscribers to the network mailing list and 192 in the database of researchers.

culture is that of the masses. It is therefore fundamentally important to collect and research these novels because these are what the majority of people read; they were the best-sellers and the lending library favorites of their day and reveal an enormous amount about cultural life in the period. Academic scholarship of the early twentieth-century has tended to focus on the avant-garde movement, modernism, and in doing so, has constructed a distorted view of literary history that often ignores what the majority of people were reading.

In the categorization of low-, middle- and high-brow literature, the question of readership is crucial. In the earlier twentieth century when the term emerged, middlebrow became associated with both a mass middle-class readership and with the female reader. The much-debated label middlebrow, therefore, is as much about who is reading, as what is read. This is demonstrated by Q.D. Leavis's seminal *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932), a key source of contemporary opinion on popular and middlebrow authorship.

This highly influential polemic, (based on Leavis's PhD thesis), sought to examine public taste in reading through an in-depth study of the production of books, from the advice of editors and the machinations of promotion, to the recommendations of the assistant on the book shop floor. Leavis aimed to be anthropological, but she brought to bear on her study the full weight of an increasing pessimism and paranoia among the cultural elite in which she wished to be part. She believed that literary culture was in a process of disintegration, soon to be dominated by lowbrow pulp, and more threateningly, the middlebrow.

Ironically, Leavis's book offers rare critical traces of the authors that she sought to demonstrate were unworthy of attention. She gives particular attention to the novelists Gilbert Frankau and Warwick Deeping, now almost forgotten, but two of the most popular writers of the period. Leavis gives quotations from Frankau's novels *Gerald Cranston's Lady and Life-and Erica*, and from Warwick Deeping's *Sorrell and Son*, to argue that they "touch grossly on fine issues":

This for the sensitive minority is no laughing matter: these novelists are read by the governing classes as well as by the masses, and they impinge directly on the world of the minority, menacing the standards by which they live. And whereas their forerunners were innocent of malice, devoting themselves to assuring their readers of "the beauty of human affection and the goodness of God," these writers are using the technique of Marie Corelli and Mrs. Barclay to work upon and solidify herd prejudice and to debase

the emotional currency by touching grossly on fine issues. (Leavis, 2000, p. 67)

The point seems to be that these novels are not worthy to examine the important emotional issues of the day. They are, by their own admission, not intellectual. Leavis seizes upon Frankau's declaration that "authorship is not so much a function of the brain as it is of the heart. And the heart is a universal organ" (p. 68). But this is simply "herd prejudice" rather than universal emotions, in Leavis's view. The reader of bestsellers, Leavis argues, goes to them "to be confirmed in his prejudices" (p. 69). However, one gets the sense from Leavis that this would be acceptable if it were just the reading of the masses—the problem is that the governing classes read them too, and thus these novels and their reading culture impinge on the sensitive minority—i.e. the intellectual.

What particularly upset Leavis is that these novelists were not trying to emulate good or highbrow literature; instead, they were openly hostile to it. Pamela Frankau wrote an account of her father's approach to writing in *Pen to Paper* (1961) which shows that he was well aware of his status in contemporary literary hierarchies:

In Gilbert's view, he was a paid entertainer, who must never for a minute lose sight of his public. It was, he admitted, as difficult as shooting on a moving target. "Unlike your highbrow friends I don't regard myself as a hothouse-blooming genius." He wrote for housewives and ex-soldiers and tired business-men and what he still called "flappers." A novel's first duty was to be long. I have seen him pick up a short one with the disgust of somebody who found something nasty in the salad: "Call that a novel – look at it ... can't be more than sixty thousand words at the outside." The public deserved their money's worth. Length, sex, colour, pace, action; and— most importantly—life-size characters. (Frankau, 1961, p. 186-187)

A focus on the importance of audiences has been a key advance in thinking developed through the Middlebrow Network's research. There has been a move away from thinking about the middlebrow as a genre or style and towards an understanding of it as a mode of production and reception. The special collection at Sheffield Hallam University was designed to support this developing direction in research, as well as involve the contemporary reading public.

Building, Researching, and Cataloging the Collection

The collection began with an initial donation of 450 books by a retiring academic, Dr. Mary Grover.³ Since then the collection has grown to 1,200 books, almost all through donations from the public. Building a collection in this way means that we do not seek and acquire particular texts to fill a perceived gap; instead, the collection grows through serendipity, and more significantly, by what texts people have thought worth keeping over the years. Many donations have come when an elderly relative dies and we receive a whole collection of novels from this period that the person valued enough to keep for over sixty years. Sometimes donations have come from the descendants of popular novelists. An important example of this was the donation of the works of Gilbert Frankau and his literary family by his grandson. The donor is noted on the catalog record for each book; searching by donor name gives a researcher the group of texts the donor kept from this period. While contemporary critical opinion often homogenized the reading of middlebrow, these individual donations show that readers often read and kept novels that ranged across the hierarchy of brows, and indeed, that novels lumped together as middlebrow have little in common in style or subject matter.

The collecting policy is to preserve early editions of adult novels published between 1900 and 1950 that were significant to contemporary readers either because they sold well or because the names of their authors were widely recognized and had come to represent the tastes of a particular readership. The collection does not usually include authors whose enduring popularity or assured place in the literary canon ensure they will remain in print or accessible in digital versions. Likewise, for reasons of space, the collection does not attempt to hold complete works for prolific, popular novelists, such as Edgar Wallace, of the period.

One of the key aims of the collection is to preserve these books as material objects. It is only with the physical artifact that we can see evidence of ownership, readership, and the value placed on the book. Many of the books in the collection contain bookplates, inscriptions, annotations, and library stamps. W. Kirk, for example, designed his own bookplate in the 1930s, which he placed in all his books. The completely forgotten comic novel *The Major's Candlesticks* by George A. Birmingham (1929) contains the original library stamps and reveal it was continually on loan from the Derby Railway Institute lending library in the early 1930s. An inscription, "From Dad" in Ethel M Dell's highly sexual and violent romance novel *The Bars of Iron* (1916), informs us that this was considered a suitable gift, presumably for a daughter. The books, most of which do not have a high monetary value, are reference only because of their increasing

3. Mary Grover is author of Warwick Deeping: *The Ordeal of Warwick Deeping: Middlebrow Authorship and Cultural Embarrassment* (Associated University Presses, 2009) and co-editor with Erica Brown, *Middlebrow Literary Cultures: The Battle of the Brows, 1920-1960* (Palgrave, 2012).

fragility through age. However, it was decided from the beginning that to increase the accessibility and usage of the collection, the books would be on open shelving rather than in the restricted special collections area. The development of the collection coincided with refurbishment of the library and a special enclosed pod was built to house it, with a desk and comfortable seating area within that quickly became popular with students and visitors. It was particularly important to keep the books on open shelves to encourage use by students, a priority for the library.

In special collections, resources are always limited. Sheffield Hallam employed one researcher to work alongside the library cataloging team. The aim, in addition to the normal cataloging of the books, was to collect highly detailed data on the novels, including: genre, subject, evidence of ownership, advertisements/marketing, plot summary, and indicators of literary and cultural taste. The last was collected through quotations from the novel which mentioned books, newspapers, plays, films, authors, and reading, or high, low, or middlebrows. The objective was to identify brow terms and depictions of other authors and texts in order to understand how fiction writers both responded to and constructed the literary hierarchies of the period. To do this the books needed to be read, and clearly the number of novels the researcher alone could read was small. Therefore, the creating of reading groups with members of the public was not only a valuable outreach activity for the university, but fulfilled a real research need.

By recruiting through links with local libraries, existing reading groups, and public lectures, we soon had two groups of readers meeting each month to read novels from the collection under the guidance of the researcher. Each person read a different novel, and completed a template to collect this information. The additional content from the form was added to the standard library catalog record using Millennium, a library Management System from Innovative Interfaces, with the researcher trained to input this additional data into the record. We decided to use the library catalog rather than building a new, stand-alone database in order to take advantage of its search capabilities and accessibility. Most importantly, using the library catalog has ensured the long-term sustainability of the resource as the library is committed to maintaining the records in the collection.

Catalog records can be searched using keywords along with controlled searching by author, title and subject. During the initial phase of the project, the library and researcher produced a listing of terms to ensure consistency of use and phraseology.⁴ These subject terms are added to a specific local subject field, thus allowing greater freedom to express themes. Genre terms such as Historical fiction, Romance fiction and

4. This list can be downloaded. Normally, the library uses Library of Congress subject headings, but as this would have limited available terms, it was agreed to deviate from this practice for this collection.

Readerships and Literary Cultures 1900-1950
Special Collection

Cataloguing Form

Fields marked with an asterisk are essential.

*Your name:

*Your contact details (email address OR postal address):

*Book author:

*Book title:

*Place of publishing, publisher and date: (eg. London: Harper and Brothers, 1908)

*First edition: YES/NO

*If this is not a first edition give publisher and date of first edition: (eg. First published by Chatto and Windus 1927)

*Genre: (choose **up to three** from the list)

*Subject keywords: (choose **up to five** from the list)

Film adaptations: (eg. This novel was made into a film of the same title in 1923. Details of films can be found at www.imdb.com)

Evidence of ownership: (eg. This book was previously owned by the Victoria Sailors' and Working Men's Club, Bridlington: Book No 268. OR Inscription: C. W. Moorley)

Advertisements/marketing: (eg. Includes a catalogue of Messrs Blackwood and Sons publications at the back of the book)

Plot summary: (up to 200 words. This should be factual, and preferably not give away the ending. Use the book review section to say what you thought of the book!)

Literary and cultural taste: (quotations from the novel which mention books, newspapers, plays, films, authors and reading, or mention high, low, or middlebrows). Please give page numbers.

Book review:
What did you think of the novel? You could consider how your modern reading might have differed from that of the original readers. With your permission this review may be posted on the blog <http://reading19001950.wordpress.com/> Up to 1,000 words

Figure 1. Catalog template. Image courtesy of Humanities Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University.

Detective fiction were mostly Library of Congress terms, with a few variations. Additionally, the library created a specific location search scope so users could limit search results to this specific collection.

The inclusion of quotations from the novel to indicate literary and cultural taste formed a particular challenge for the catalog. We wanted the names of authors and texts mentioned in the novels to be searchable, but clearly it was not possible to put whole quotations on the record. Also, while the names of authors quoted should be searchable it should be clear to the catalog user that the record returned is not a book by that author. The solution we found was to put the list of authors and texts mentioned in a notes field with the entry beginning with the phrase “this novel contains literary and cultural references to...”. The quotations themselves were put in a Word document which linked to the record. Over 200 books in the collection now have this enhanced cataloging, forming a significant research resource.

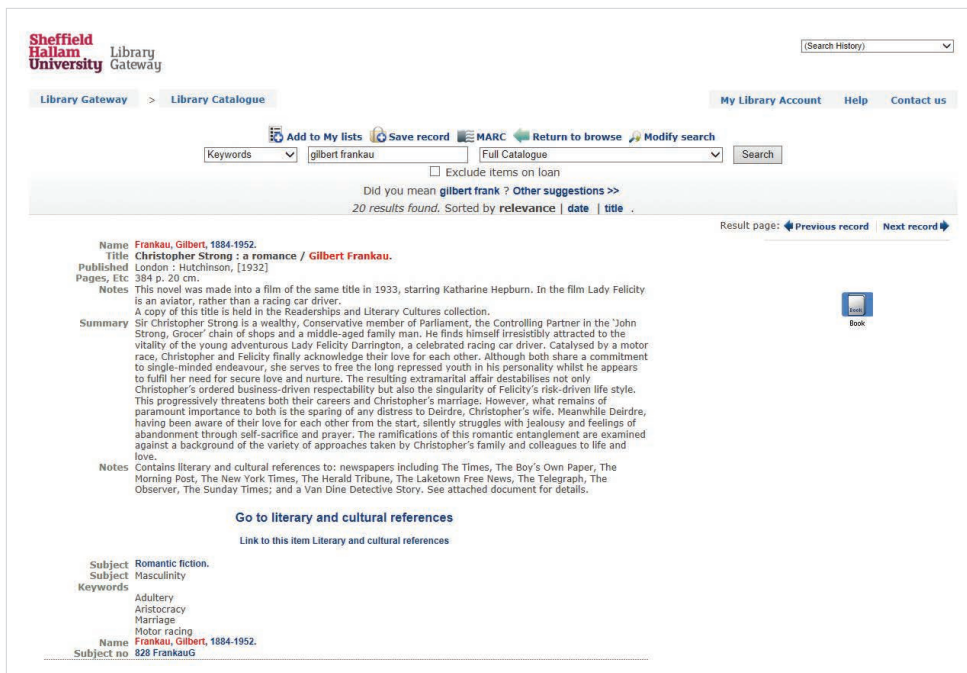


Figure 2. A catalog record. Image courtesy of Humanities Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University

Reviews documenting contemporary reader responses are a key part of the collection project, along with enhanced cataloging. Readers are asked to consider how their response might differ from the original readers, and why. For example, in the case of Gilbert Frankau, those characteristics that made him a consistent bestseller in the early twentieth century did not make him popular with modern readers of our groups. His novel *Royal Regiment* (1938) was described by one of our readers as a “cure for insomnia,” and most others fared only a little better. These reviews are posted to a blog. This blog, rather than being aimed at librarians or academics, is written for general readership and receives more views than our academic-facing Middlebrow Network site.

Many donors have found out about the collection through the blog, and it brings us into conversation with people from around the world who are similarly interested in these books and the era’s literary scene.⁵

Project Impact

The Readerships and Literary Cultures 1900-1950 project formed a key part of Sheffield Hallam’s English department submission to the Research Excellence Framework in 2014. This system for assessing

5. The blog holds over 200 book reviews, and since its launch has received over 67,000 page views. It has 229 email followers and another 186 on twitter.

the quality of research in UK higher education institutions breaks research into three components: Outputs, Research Environment, and Impact. Departments are required to submit Impact Case Studies, which demonstrate the impact their research has had outside academia.⁶ Alongside academic outputs, project activities of reading groups, public lectures, film screenings, and blog and social media presence were designed with the need to document this Case Study in mind. This system of assessing research has had the effect of making universities more systematic in their public engagement activities, and more rigorous in their documentation and evaluation of them. In the collection project, as well as having an effect on the wider world, we needed to be able to evidence this with quantitative and qualitative data. The blog, in particular, was invaluable in reaching out to the public and in giving them the opportunity to discuss the books with us. The comments function allows lively conversations to take place, and helpfully for the researcher, all comments are recorded for future reference. Through the blog statistics we can see how many people have visited and where in the world they reside: 51% of visits are from the UK, and 49% are international, with 32% consisting of visits from the US, Canada and Australia, and 17% from the rest of the world. This international engagement is a delightful development, only made possible by web-based activities.

The most significant impact of the project has been on the reading group members. Rather than being passive recipients of knowledge

6. <http://www.ref.ac.uk/about/>
Outputs are weighted at 65%,
Environment at 15% and Impact
is 20% of the overall assessment.

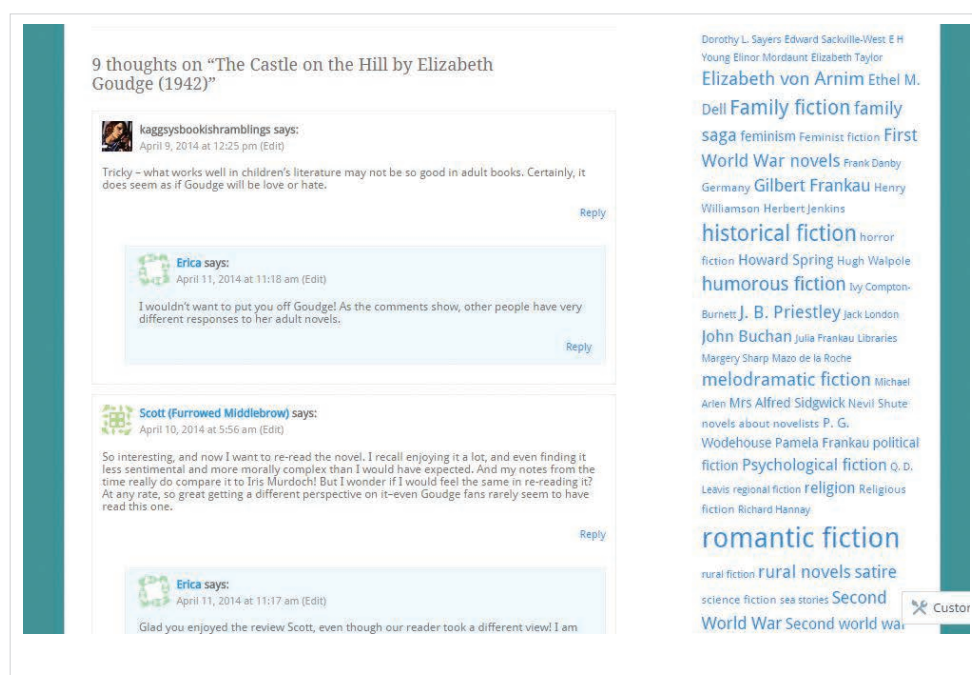


Figure 3. Comments on the blog. Image courtesy of Humanities Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University.

disseminated by the researcher, as might be the case in a traditional public lecture, reading group members became co-producers of research. At intervals we asked them what effect the process of coming to the reading groups and completing the enhanced cataloging had on them. There was a significant development in their critical thinking, skills, and knowledge: “I read more consciously, am more reflective on what I read and do learn more.” “I am learning to trust my opinions and find evidence to support them.” “I am far more focused and analytical.” We found there was great enthusiasm for the project in Sheffield, perhaps surprising in a city stereotyped as not particularly bookish. We quickly expanded the reading group to two groups, and there was a waiting list to join throughout the project.

For the Impact Case Study, work with the public is only considered impactful if it is underpinned by research produced by the institution. We had a strong base of publications in the field when we began, but as the project developed, work with the public fed into our scholarship, making this a process of knowledge exchange. Eight members of the reading group attended the collection academic conference *Culture Wars 1900-1950* in June, 2014, and contributed significantly to the debate. The researcher wrote an article, “The Rise and Fall of ‘the original Bright Young Thing:’ Beverley Nichols, *Crazy Pavements* (1927) and Popular Authorship,” which developed out of the intertextual data collected for the enhanced catalog record. This was also an example of the strength of having a physical collection for research; until the Nichols novel was received as a donation, the researcher had never heard of it so would not otherwise have done this research. This is the first scholarly article on this culturally important but now forgotten author.

Conclusion

Overall with the collection there are many benefits to having the material objects, from the evidence of ownership and reception, to the joys of being able to browse the shelves and come across authors you would not have known to seek out. Online, enhanced cataloging means that we have also created an electronic resource that can be used remotely by scholars across the world. The experience of working with the general public offers both an example of successful impact, and demonstrates how members of the public can contribute to collection development and research. It has also been extremely rewarding for everyone involved. As funding for the researcher has come to an end, members of the reading group have carried on meeting to read the forgotten novels of 1900-1950 independently, and are continuing to share their reading responses on the blog.

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Training the Next Generation: Best Practices in Student Training at the University of California, Riverside Libraries

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Abstract

From 2010 to 2014, the University of California, Riverside Libraries Special Collections & Archives Department developed and implemented a student employees training program with a focus on education and expectations. This paper discusses the best practices used to develop student employees' "soft skills" in addition to training them to be integral members of the daily operations of the department.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Archives, Special Collections, Student Hiring, Student Employees, Training Program

Training the Next Generation: Best Practices in Student Training at the University of California, Riverside Libraries

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Academic libraries routinely entrust student employees with daily library services and tasks, ensuring the consistency of library operations. With the decrease in recent years of support staff positions and widespread budgetary reductions, student assistants are hired and trained to develop specialized skill sets in order to fulfill the responsibilities that had previously been assigned to full time paraprofessional and professional staff. In addition, academic libraries within the structure of higher education have a responsibility to assist in the educational process of undergraduate students.

Given the uniqueness of special collections' materials and the range of services performed, such departments function as a "mini-library," with student employees serving on the front lines and behind-the-scenes. Some departments have processing units for newly cataloged material, minimal level archival processing and basic preservation needs. Additionally, special collections departments provide regular public service functions. In many cases, desks are staffed by student employees who field and answer informational and basic reference questions. This is one of many aspects of a special collections department that creates an environment somewhat separate from the library as a whole.

Because special collections departments rely so heavily on student employees, supervising and managing them can pose many challenges. Much of the professional literature suggests creating a "game plan."

Dunlap (2007) suggests developing goals and objectives for a student training program, stating “[G]oals serve as a guide by providing direction for the training and development process and should be closely aligned to support the organization’s mission” (p. 9). In the Special Collections & Archives Department at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), paraprofessional and professional staff discussed goals regarding what the department expected from the student employees, in addition to what the student employees might gain from employment within the library.

At the time UCR Special Collections & Archives Department provided access to more than 400,000 books, including the Vernon Duke Collection on Paris, an extensive History of the Book Collection, and the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction & Fantasy, then world’s largest publicly-accessible collection of science fiction, fantasy, horror and utopian literature. It also comprised more than 6000 linear feet of archival collections including the Citrus Experiment Station, Tomas Rivera Archive, the Tuskegee Airmen Archive, the Sabino Osuna Photographic Archive of the Mexican Revolution, and the Paraguayan political archives.

In 2011, financial constraints at the University resulted in the downsizing of the department. Two professional positions and one paraprofessional position were lost to retirement and transfer, leaving the department to operate with two professionals, one 1.0 FTE paraprofessional, and one .50 FTE paraprofessional. Additionally, due to reduction in Work Study funds, the student employee pool had been smaller than it had been before 2010. During these four years the department employed only seven to nine federal work study students.

As the leading research collection of science fiction and fantasy, the Eaton Collection served as the major educational resource for the English, Comparative Literature, and Media departments at UCR. Both undergraduate and graduate students conducted research in the department, as did international scholars, Science Fiction fans, and general “SCI-FI” enthusiasts. Many undergraduate English course would assign students to read comic books from the Eaton Collections. During those courses, seats in the Reading Room were in short supply, so students were required to sign a waiting list or schedule in advance for access to the course materials. On a monthly average anywhere from 81 to 140 patrons visited the Reading Room and student employees completed, on average, 250 to 400 reproductions a month.

Before 2010, student employees were divided among different units within the department. There were Public Service/Stacks Maintenance students, Preservation students, and Archival students, supervised and reviewed by a member of the staff within that section of the unit. This created mini silos within the department where student employees had

different expectations and standards for their work. Students who did not serve on the information desk had more leeway with their schedules. In addition, expectations towards the quality of work were not uniform among supervisors.

As the department underwent staffing changes through retirements, transfers and layoffs, there was a need to reorganize student employee time and duties. Discussion about goals and needs continued among the department staff, leading to the resolution to develop a better interviewing process and training program, and to establish defined expectations and standards for student employees. Preparing undergraduate students for the workforce after college was also a key element of training and supervision.

Following the suggestions, techniques and strategies given in the professional literature, this paper discusses the design and best practices used in successfully implementing the hiring and training program at the University of California, Riverside Special Collections & Archives beginning in 2010.

Advantages of Mentoring Student Employees

Mentoring, whether formally or informally, is an important element of student supervision. As librarians, we set examples and expectations that could be advantageous to a student employee and the profession as a whole. Much of the literature acknowledges the need for student employees in academic libraries to conduct daily activities. Reale (2013) states that it is within the best interest of libraries to train their students well, not only in the art of service, but as young adults who will soon enter and face the actual work world themselves. As library professionals we partner with the educational process and the time and effort invested in mentoring reaps benefits for both student employees and librarians (p.1).

In a survey conducted by Maxey-Harries, Cross, and McFarland (2010) on the educational experience of professional library staff, fifty percent of the respondents had “previous experience as a student worker at a college or university library” (p.152). As Reale suggests, “[I]f we, as academic librarians and other paraprofessionals, are working side by side with students day in and day out, we have to seize the opportunity to help them along in their job and what would be so terrible if a few who were helped along the way actually became interested in the changing field of library science” (p. 3). Mentoring and providing a work environment similar to the actual working world could instill motivation and personal fulfillment in the student, while also bringing new life to a “graying” profession.

It would be reasonable to suggest that many undergraduate students have one goal in mind-- to graduate from college. However, mentoring

can give the student direction and a sense of achievement, while simultaneously maintaining an efficient workflow in the department. Sweetman (2007) suggests that having an interest in the job is a better form of motivation than incentives and rewards (p. 123). Giving student employees ownership over their recommendations and ideas can stimulate enthusiasm for the job. To create such an environment Sweetman recommends librarians engage student employees at all levels of expertise in conversation pertaining to their job responsibilities (p. 124). While there is a substantial investment of time in involving students in discussions, there are benefits to the students, the library, and ultimately the profession. These benefits more than justify time invested.

After 2010, student employees at UCR became a more integral part of the department, recognized for their contributions to providing enhanced access to materials and better service for researchers. The direct supervisor schedule monthly meetings to communicate past and upcoming activities and projects within the department and library. Student employees participated in the department's social media campaign, in addition to providing feedback about current policies and procedures. Since these student employees interacted with the public and were the key operators of the day-to-day department functions, their input was very important.

Specialized Needs of a Special Collections Department

Many students entering a special collections department lack the experience and understanding of such a department. According to Wiener (2010), “[I]n the case of undergraduate students, it is very unlikely that entering students will also come with any sort of knowledge of what an archival institution is, what it does, or what types of work takes place within its confines. This presents a particularly unique challenge when one is trying to train a student about a task which is unfamiliar in purpose, significance, or meaning” (p. 59). While a special collections department is typically placed within an academic library, there are often vast differences in holdings, daily services, tasks, and needs in such a department. To maximize the training process and the skills of an incoming student employee, it is important for the student to have a comprehensive understanding of the specialized nature and purpose of a special collections department.

The uniqueness of rare, specialized, and archival material requires adjustments in traditional library duties, such as public service and stacks maintenance tasks. Given that material within a special collection does not circulate, traditional check-in/checkout procedures, informational and reference tasks are modified in an effort to balance access with

preservation of the collection. Such tasks may seem similar to those performed in an Access Services or Reference department, but standard procedures throughout academic libraries do not always apply in such a department.

As for UCR, the department developed two ways of communicating the specialized nature and purpose of a special collection through a detailed job description and interviewing process before a student employee was even hired. Once UCR hired a student, he or she participated in information and preservation training sessions before working with or around the material.

Student Employee Job Description

When developing a student employee training program there is, first and foremost, a need for staff to convey a clear understanding of the needs of a special collections department. The optimal student employee training program requires a detailed job description, defined hiring practices, and durable training modules. In creating the job description, the UCR staff surveyed and evaluated the tasks that needed to be completed by student employees. Many of the tasks had already been assigned to student employees; however, documentation of expectations, duties and responsibilities, training tools, and delivery format were either limited or non-existent.

Starting in 2010, UCR created a new job description and interview procedures to outline the needs of student employees in the department, along with a revised student employee manual, and a student employee guidelines and standards form. Tolppanen and Derr's (2009) survey of academic libraries Access Service departments identified nineteen core tasks student employees performed, such as check-in/checkout, patron assistance away from the circulation desk, and equipment maintenance (p.316). Depending on the policies and procedures of a special collections department, additional steps may need to be taken into account. For example, instructing the patron on why they are asked to place personal bags in a locker and show photo identification.

Sweetman (2007) also recommends that job descriptions include specific, measurable tasks that the student employee will be responsible for carrying out (p. 48). Given the specialized needs of the department, the following bullet points—which echoed the UCR Special Collections policies and procedures—address specific job responsibilities:

- » Provides professional and timely service to researchers, faculty, students, and staff;

- » Follow basic procedures for the careful handling and preservation of rare materials;
- » Monitors the Special Collections & Archives Reading Room;
- » Ensures security and safety of Special Collections & Archives material being used;
- » Processes rare materials/books for Special Collections & Archives;
- » Pages and shelves books and archival collections within a complex shelf arrangement;
- » Accurately and clearly types detailed information on flags, and folders;
- » Completes reproduction requests for rare books and archival material, following all policies and procedures;
- » Uses a flatbed and overhead scanner to create digital images of photographic prints and documents;
- » Rehouses and labels containers for manuscripts and university archives in accordance with archival standards;
- » Assists with collection maintenance tasks such as shifting, shelf reading, labeling, and keeping areas organized;
- » Assists librarians and other supervisors with special projects;
- » Other duties or special projects as assigned.

For a more detailed job description please see Appendix 1.

Hiring Student Employees

Academic libraries have general interviewing questions, many of which are tailored to an access services or circulation department. There is a need for additional explication when it comes to working in a special collections department. Providing information at the beginning of an interview helps a supervisor correct any misunderstanding or misconceptions about working in such a department. During this process the interviewee can decide if special collections is in fact a place where he or she would like

to work (Reale p.7). At the same time, an interviewee's responses and demeanor help the supervisor evaluate the ability of the student to interact with a patron and communicate effectively. At UCR the revised student interview process after 2010 consisted of twelve boilerplate questions, and an introductory paragraph that provided the interviewee with a clear definition of the difference between general library operations and that of a special collections department:

Special Collections & Archives is a little different than the rest of the library. It houses rare books, manuscripts, and archival materials. Our holdings do not circulate, but may be used in the departmental reading room. This involves more security than the rest of the library. This position has many different responsibilities from monitoring the reading room to processing rare materials, shelving books and archives, and interacting with patrons in person or over the phone. Student employees work when the library is open even if the campus is not in session such as, the summer, and over the Christmas break and spring break (Allison p.1).

Training Student Employees

To ensure quality work and long-term service, training is the next and most crucial step of student employee management. As Farrell and Driver (2010) suggest, scheduling meetings with student employees allows them to ask questions, to get to know their co-workers, and to develop a better understanding of library policies and procedures (p. 189). This creates and fulfills a need for a participatory style of training that should be conducted throughout the supervision of the student employee.

A supervisor must maintain a level of organization, documentation and commitment of time while supervising student employees. Additionally, a supervisor must possess time management skills, particularly the ability to multi-task. As Connell and Mileham (2006) discuss, training student employees demands an ongoing commitment of time and effort, but ongoing training allows student employees to reflect on what they have learned, encouraging retention of knowledge versus a one-shot session (p. 81-2). Development of a training checklist may be the best form of documentation and organization for both a supervisor and student employee. The checklist should include every task a student employee needs to learn to be a successful member of the department (Sweetman p.89). With student employees, it is important to remember that their studies will and always should come first. Their schedules may not allow

a time to work two consecutive days in a row. Providing student employees with a checklist helps them visualize their progress and accomplishments.

Hiring Packet

Given the fact that most undergraduate students have never worked in a library and that many students are hired for their first job while in college, providing student employees with library and departmental information is a necessity. Farrell and Driver (2010) discuss this briefly and refer to it as providing an “insider’s view of the operation of the library and introductions to each faculty and staff member, including a short description of the staff member’s job responsibilities” (p.189). Furthermore, Sweetman (2007) suggests including an orientation with an overview of the library and an explanation of how student employees’ tasks directly fit into the mission of the department and the library (p.87).

UCR developed a new student employee hiring packet to be presented to new student employees on their first day of employment. It included a welcome letter from their supervisor with a list of the material within the packet. This provided the students with information available to them throughout their training, and gave each student a sense of acceptance within the department. The packet included the student employee guidelines contract, guidelines and procedures manual, evaluation standards, emergency procedures, and the training checklist.

Format and Delivery

Manley and Holley (2014) state training tutorials should be created in two different formats, voice-over PowerPoint presentations and demonstration video clips (p. 82). Whereas Sweetman (2007) outlines a “show and tell” method to training, stating “when training a student, make sure to show him or her how to do the task at hand, and explain the context for what they will be doing. People tend to retain what they are taught if they are given a context of why various steps are important” (p. 93). A combination of these two suggestions creates a theoretical and practical approach to training, with continual opportunities for conversation.

The UCR special collections department training program approached this style of training through nine different sections. A majority of these sections began with a PowerPoint lecture (delivered by the unit head) and moved to hands-on training sessions. Videos about security, reading room procedures, and stack maintenance provided a visual learning component. Most of the hands-on training sessions used special collection material, or role playing interactions. For example, training was conducted through

the physical handling, rehousing, and retrieving of material, and student employees participated in “pseudo patron” interactions, in person or over the telephone.

Cross Training Needs

Cross training of student employees can provide a department with employees able to perform multiple tasks. At UCR, the student employees were cross-trained to work in all areas of the department, beginning with mostly project-based work with the collection. This allowed student employees to gain a better understanding of the material within the department and provided them with the tools to deliver a higher level of reference service. In addition, cross training provided the department with multiple backups for Public Service needs including minimal reference and/or retrievals.

Draper, Oswald, and Renfro (2007) discuss the benefit of cross training student employees, stating “because of the cross training, students do not get bored with their jobs and the library has a bigger pool of students to choose from when having to schedule a public service desk” (p. 137). This echoes Sweetman’s (2007) sentiment that engagement of student employees raises their interest level. Cross training has the added benefit of giving student employees the opportunity to acquire new skills and learn new techniques, while providing a needed function to the department and the library.

Training Checklist

Implemented in the fall of 2010, UCR developed the following nine sections that facilitate the new student employee¹ training module:

1. Administration
2. Security
3. Preservation
4. Stacks Maintenance
5. Reproductions
6. Archival Training
7. Acquisitions and ILS Training
8. Processing
9. Public Service Training

1. For purposes of clarity, student employees will be referred to as employees throughout the rest of the article

The direct student supervisor, support staff member and professional staff responsible for a specific unit within the department conducted the corresponding training section. Given the number of employees hired at one time and depending on their school schedules, new employees often moved through the training together. After a training section was completed, new employees were paired with senior employees to work together, the newer ones shadowing the seniors.

For example, a new employee was paired with a senior employee for an hour a day to work on shelving after completing the stack maintenance section. The senior employee observed the new employee, making sure that proper handling and shelving techniques were being followed. Eventually, the department hoped to move towards a tiered student employee structure, similar to other UC Access Services departments (student assistant 1 and 2), allowing for senior employees to conduct the training sections and oversee new employees. Below are summaries of the training sections. For an example of the training checklist please see Appendix 2.0.

The first section of training was an informational session between the direct supervisor and the new student employee. During this session the new employee received the hiring packet, a tour of the department, met the department head, and reviewed department websites (both public and internal), including the department blog where projects, schedules and announcements were placed, along with the opening and closing procedures and other office needs.

The second section, security, was developed to provide new employees with information pertaining to the security guidelines suggested by the Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (ACRL/RBMS) Security Committee. In this section, the focus was on security procedures and why UCR's Special Collections & Archives conducts policies and procedures in such a manner.

In the Preservation section, the Preservationist trained new employees on the proper techniques of handling special collections material. This training was considered a high priority given that such tasks as stacks maintenance, reproductions orders, processing and public service could not be conducted without this basic understanding. It was also an educational tool to help employees build their confidence in following the policies and procedures to be a contributing member of the department.

Section four, stacks maintenance, was developed to train new employees to understand and locate Library of Congress call numbers within the stacks. In addition, staff provided definitions and specific reasons why such tasks and shelving, shelf reading, and shifting needed to be completed, all linking back to the department goals of access and preservation.

Reproductions are key to providing access and public service to a collection, however, preservation is a more important priority. In section five, an employee used the skills gained in the preservation section and continued to build on his or her understanding as to what material can and cannot be reproduced, he or she became capable of explaining, with confidence, the reasoning behind the department's reproduction policies.

In section six, the employee received hands-on-training and worked directly with the department archivist. To reinforce key training lessons, new employees were assigned paging requests for archival material during their shift. A senior employee shadowed the new employee to ensure he or she conducted the process properly. Additionally each new employee received an archival project within the first few months of employment.

In section seven, the training program was to work directly with the Integrated Library System (ILS). Employees learned the different searching options, location codes, and identifying key notes or messages within records. The employee was assigned a search project using recent donations to the collection. Such a project provided employees an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the ILS system. At the conclusion of this training and project employees were skilled enough to handle the first level of reference, limiting the need for assistance from professional staff.

Section eight focused on processing newly cataloged special collections material. Consisting mostly of books, employees implemented techniques and skills learned from other sections of training during the processing of new material. For example, the employees were expected to identify preservation concerns when an item arrived, such as the need for an enclosure. Since employees were the first to see new material entering the department, their understanding of the collection was once again enhanced, contributing to the goal of providing access.

The final section, public service built on the skills learned in sections one through eight and summarized the workflows to facilitate effective public service within the department. Each new employee shadowed a senior employee at the information desk. This gave the new employee a chance to conduct observations and to ask questions of their peers. Senior employees conducted role playing scenarios and reference interviews with the new employee. If a professional staff member was available, he or she would take part in a scenario. For more detail on the training section please see Appendix 3.0.

The amount of time spent on this training depended on the individual employee and his or her personal abilities. However, at this point in the program all of the employees were very excited to move to the information desk, hoping to test what they had learned through their training and to prove what they had accomplished.

Communication

Training requires both theory and practice and these elements cannot be conducted without some form of communication. The tools to provide training and ongoing management required a level of communication between the employee, his or her direct supervisor, and the department staff. Power (2011) states that training is about communication, which evolves, and training programs must adapt to successfully enrich communication between professional staff and student employees (p.69). At UCR, most of this training was completed via paper or through hands- on practice. However, as the department's professional staff became busier with other duties, communication with student employees needed to be improved.

Jetton (2009) mentions the use of proper distribution methods for training material. "Distribution methods that were reviewed included traditional paper materials, shared folders or directories on a library server, staff Web page, document-management software, blogs and wikis, and course-management software" (p. 24). Following this model, the department utilized a staff intranet webpage to provide electronic access to all training material, along with all needed tools for daily duties of student employees. Further, the establishment of a department blog streamlined communication for projects and department schedules. This tool was very useful in continuing a level of communication between student employees and professional staff.

There were limitations and restrictions with this form of communication. Both Jetton (2009) and Power (2011) state the use of a course management system could be useful. Jetton suggests that courseware can provide tools needed for training, such as built-in student assessment or quizzes (p. 26). Power (2011) states that using Blackboard for training, documentation and communication centralizes the use of technology already used by students (p.70). While this had not been implemented in Special Collections & Archives at UCR, such tools could continue to improve communication and training between staff and student employees through the profession.

Outcomes of the Training

At the beginning of 2015, a survey was sent to employees who had worked in the UCR Special Collections & Archives Department for the entire four years of their college education, i.e., from 2010 to 2014. Of the eight employees who worked in the department, six answered the survey regarding their experience with the training program. All six respondents indicated

they liked the format of training. When asked to describe what they liked about the training a respondent stated, “[I]t was a gradual process from shelving to working the front desk.” Another respondent also mentioned this gradual move forward and commented on how it allowed each of them to become really good at one task before moving on to another aspect of their work.

The respondents also mentioned their fondness for the structure and organization, stating, “I knew exactly what, why and how I was supposed to complete a task and also I knew what I had to learn next.” Another mentioned the educational aspect of having meetings to discuss the training required to complete certain tasks of working in a special collections department and why that training was important and extremely helpful. Not only did the student employees learn the duties of their job, they also learned the importance and meaning behind working in such a department.

In addition to the training, all the respondents believed they were members of the department’s staff. This was key for student-staff communication, but, more importantly, it added to the development and confidence of the student employees. All respondents felt that being a member and working in the department gave them a better understanding of the library as a whole.

Several faculty members and visiting researchers commented on the excellent service they received from the department after 2010. One faculty member, a frequent visitor, commented in an e-mail to the head of Special Collections & Archives, that after 2010, “student staff became much more organized and professional, clearly much better prepared. The student supervisor did a truly outstanding job of orienting and overseeing the staff.”

From the supervisor’s perspective, retention of student employees was higher and quality of work improved between 2010 and 2014. Student employees had pride in their own job performance and in the overall performance of the department. They were members of the department and communication improved among the professional staff and student employees.

Conclusion

While this training program was specific to the Special Collections & Archives Department at the University of California, Riverside Libraries, it drew from other peer reviewed training programs and could be adapted to benefit other organizations. Student employees will continue to be a valuable resource in the daily operations of libraries. As Reale (2013) states, “[O]ften, we can get caught up in our own sense of importance and in the satisfying idea of being able to positively influence students, but as my own boss, in her infinite wisdom, consistently reminds me and my colleagues, ‘*It’s not about us.*’ And while we know that, it doesn’t hurt to be reminded” (p. 43). The function of the academic

libraries within the educational profession --whether through instructional sessions, information literacy seminars, or student employment-- is to provide information and access to aid in the development of skills for the next generation, and this applies in particular to the students in our own institutions. Requiring students to follow work schedules, learn useful skills, and meet expectations will give them an edge in finding a place in the workforce once they graduate, or even help guide them in choosing a satisfying career. In some cases, we can hope, that the career they chose will be in the field of library and information science.²

2. The direct supervisor left in 2014 for a professional position. It is unclear whether this program is still being implemented.

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Appendixes

1.0: Job Description

Student employee Job Description for Special Collections & Archives

Under the supervision of the Reading Room Coordinator and Office Manager, incumbent learns the policies and procedures established by the UCR libraries Special Collections & Archives (SC&A) for working with rare books and archival materials. The schedule for this position is Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Students hired to work in SC&A must commit to working summers and during Spring Break.

The student performs the following routine tasks:

- » Provides professional and timely service to researcher, faculty, students, and staff;
- » Follow basic procedures for the careful handling and preservation of rare materials;
- » Monitors the Reading Room and Costo Room;
- » Ensures security and safety of SC&A materials being used;
- » Processes rare materials/books for SC&A;
- » Pages and shelves books and archival collections within complex shelf arrangement systems;
- » Accurately and clearly types or writes detailed information on flags, and folders;
- » Performs basic searches on the online public access catalogues Millennium (SCOTTY) and MELVYL;
- » Completes reproduction requests for rare books and archival material, following all policies and procedures;
- » Uses a flatbed and overhead scanner to create digital images of photographic prints and documents;
- » Rehouses and label containers for manuscripts and university archives in accordance with archival standards;

- » Assists with collection maintenance tasks such as shifting, shelf reading, labeling, and keeping areas organized;
- » Assist librarians and other supervisors with special projects;
- » Other duties or special projects as assigned.

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

Strong interpersonal skills with ability to work successfully in an intensely collaborative environment with a broad range of people from culturally diverse backgrounds including colleagues, administrators, students, faculty, donors, and alumni;

- » Ability to perform semi-skilled clerical work (typing, filing, etc.);
- » Ability to arrange materials by Library of Congress call numbers;
- » Ability to perform repetitive tasks accurately;
- » Ability to safely handle rare materials;
- » Ability to perform some manual labor, including shelving books and boxes of up to 25 lbs, carrying supplies, light maintenance and custodial tasks, and shifting of collections;
- » Ability to do basic searches on the online public access catalogues Millennium (SCOTTY) and MELVYL;
- » Ability to operate computers, printers, and scanners;
- » Computer skills sufficient to work with word processing and database software;
- » Public or customer service experience is highly desirable

2.0: Student Employee Training Checklist

Student Employee:	Hire date	Before School Year	Winter Break	Spring Break	End of School Year
Section 1: Administration a. Hiring packet b. Tour c. Emergency procedures d. SC&A presentation with Head e. Departmental Manual f. Overview of departmental website g. Opening procedures h. Closing procedures i. Mail Room					
Section 2: Security a. Security PowerPoint b. Reading Room Security c. Sign-in Sheet					
Section 3: Preservation a. Preservation PowerPoint b. Identifying basic preservation needs c. Proper use of book cradles d. Proper handling, shelving, and paging of material e. Proper use of placement of materials on shelving trucks f. Book Jackets g. Proper housing of materials h. Proper reproduction techniques					
Section 4: Stacks Maintenance a. Stacks Maintenance PowerPoint b. Call Numbers and locations c. Call number test d. Shelving e. Shelving test f. Shelf Reading g. Shifting					
Section 5: Reproductions a. Review of Reproduction techniques b. Reproduction requests c. ILL requests					
Section 6: Archival Training a. Archival PowerPoint b. Basic archival terminology c. Overview of SC&A "Flagship Collection" d. Website training e. Overview of Online Archive of California (OAC) f. Locating, paging, and shelving archival materials g. Policies and procedures h. Archival project					
Section 7: Acquisitions and ILS a. Acquisitions and ILS PowerPoint b. ILS Training c. Searching Training d. Comparing Training e. ILS Test					
Section 8: Processing a. Processing PowerPoint b. Book Processing Training c. Processing test					
Section 8: Public Service a. Public Service PowerPoint b. Information desk policies/procedures c. When a researcher arrives d. When a researcher leaves e. Materials being used by a researcher f. Phone etiquette procedure g. Researcher questions over the phone h. Transferring phone calls i. Review of "Sign-In" sheet j. Information desk statistics					

3.0: Detailed Training Sections

Section 1: Administration

This was an informational session between the direct supervisor and the new student employee. Here, the employee received a hiring packet and time to read the student guidelines and procedures manual, along with the student employee guidelines contract. This contract provided a written expectation of the employee's professional behavior towards researchers and the public, in addition to policies and procedures pertaining to break times and calling in sick. Once the employee reviewed these documents, the direct supervisor provided an opportunity for discussion and questions.

Following this discussion, the employee received a tour of the department and an overview of activities within each unit. On this tour, the employee met all members of the department, and heard a brief description of each staff member's responsibilities and duties. Time was set aside for the employee to meet with the head of the department for a short one-on-one session designed for the employee to gain a deeper understanding of the role of a special collections department.

The last part of this section was dedicated to an overview of departmental communications and daily functions. This included department websites (both public and internal), the department blog where projects, schedules and announcements were placed, along with the opening and closing procedures and other office needs, such as mailroom runs. While this section was time consuming, it was important for the employee to have an overview of the basic elements of the department. This aided in the other sections of training, most specifically to the Security Section.

Section 2: Security

This section, along with others in the training, provided time for employee feedback and discussion, continuing a participatory style of training. Designed to provide information regarding the guidelines suggested by the Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (ACRL/RBMS) Security Committee, this session outlined policies pertaining to a special collections department. A PowerPoint presentation provided the history of ACRL/RBMS, the Security Committee, and detailed recommendations for maintaining a secure department. In addition to reading the section in the student manual and viewing the presentation, each employee received a review of the departmental security procedures from his or her direct supervisor and the head of the department. Here, the focus was

on security and why UCR's Special Collections & Archives conducts policies and procedures in such a manner.

During this session, the employee had a chance to answer questions pertaining to such security procedures. For example, recommendations from the Security Committee outline elements of a secured reading room. The direct supervisor provided this information through the PowerPoint presentation (in addition to the department tour and material within the hiring packet) and then asked the employee to name one of the department's policies that facilitated a recommendation from the Security Committee. This allowed the student to show what he or she learned and for the direct supervisor to observe the employee's level of comprehension.

It was very important for an employee to understand the need for following the security policies and procedures of the department to ensure access for future generations. Educating new employees on the "dos and don'ts" of security within the department helped provide a foundation of knowledge and room for professional growth.

Section 3: Preservation

UCR developed the section to train employees on the proper technique of handling special collections material. Many employees have little or no experience with such material. It was discussed and determined by the staff members that the understanding of preservation policies and procedures should be a high training priority. Such tasks as stacks maintenance, reproductions orders, processing and public service could not be conducted without this basic understanding.

The preservationist designed and facilitated this training, which consisted of a PowerPoint presentation introducing policies and procedures and then a hands-on training session, which included handling and using the material, proper stacks maintenance techniques, and minimal level preservation work. During this training, new student employees learned how to identify and correct basic preservation problems including how to house materials in Mylar enclosures; how to create custom protective book jackets; how to handle materials properly during photocopying or scanning projects; how to shelve and remove items from the stacks; and how to identify stacks maintenance issues such as too-tight spacing or crowding that could damage fragile material.

Through this preservation training, employees learned how to take care of material within the department. This provided them with a foundation of knowledge to better provide superior public service, to feel confident in following the policies and procedures, and to be able to contribute to the overarching goals of a special collections department.

Section 4: Stacks Maintenance

To ensure consistency, UCR used a PowerPoint presentation to discuss the three areas of stacks maintenance: shelving, shelf reading, and shifting. The direct supervisor provided definitions and specific reasons why these tasks needed to be completed, all linking back to the department goals of access and preservation. The training included instruction on the use of the Library of Congress call numbers and the many locations within the stacks for different types of materials; the importance of shelf reading and its value in protecting and preserving the collection; and shifting. While the first two areas were the main focus of this training, shifting was project based, requiring in-depth training when needed. However, providing basic information on how and why shifting occurs gave the employee a sense of understanding with regard to general library functions, further developing the employee's understanding of the department and library as a whole.

Connell and Mileham (2006) suggest spreading training throughout the year (p. 81). Continual training within the stacks maintenance section allowed an employee to develop their understanding of the department's collection at their own pace. Once stacks maintenance training was completed, employees conducted daily duties such as shelving and ongoing shelf reading, along with assigned stacks projects. Reale (2013) suggests that professionals can help student employees see their place in the library as an extension of the classroom where they will learn skills that can extend way beyond their college experience (p. 45).

For example, on many occasions, completion of a task, such as shelving, sparked an employee's interest. Given the opportunity to physically work with the collection, employees gained additional knowledge of the material within the department. Many of them saw the new material added to the collection and asked questions as to why such an item would be housed in the department. Such discussion and the additional knowledge of the collection aided the employees in conducting their public service duties more efficiently. This gave the employee the tools needed to answer basic information and reference questions, provide access and promote the collection.

Section 5: Reproductions

Reproductions are key to providing significant access and public service to the collection. Preservation, however, is a more important priority. The skills learned in the preservation section were vital and follow-through became very important. Additionally, once an employee gained a level of understanding as to what material can and cannot be reproduced, he or she is capable

of explaining, with confidence, the reasoning behind the department's reproduction policies.

During this training, employees also learned the workflow for reproductions. The preservationist provided a refresher session on how to handle material on the reproduction equipment within the department (photocopier, scanner, and camera). Once completed, the new employee was paired with a senior employee when a reproduction request came through. The senior employee took the lead and moved through the workflow explaining every step to the new employee. Eventually, the new student would be assigned and complete reproduction requests independently.

Section 6: Archival Training

Similar to the preservation training, the department archivist conducted this portion of the training. A PowerPoint presentation provided definitions and examples of archival and manuscript collections, along with an overview of the flagship collections within the department. An employee received training in locating archival collection records in the library catalog and through the Online Archive of California.

The employee received hands-on training, working directly with the archivist, on the archival workflow for paging/retrieving material from different locations throughout the department. This included filling out the paging/retrieval slip, identifying the location within the stacks, and proper paging technique. To reinforce key training lessons, UCR assigned new employees paging requests for archival material during their shifts. A senior employee shadowed the new employee to ensure he or she conducted the process properly. Additionally each new employee received an archival project within the first few months of employment. This included, but was not limited to, rehousing new accessions, scanning projects and minimal level processing in Archivist Toolkit.

Section 7: Acquisitions and ILS Training

After physically working with the collection through projects and daily tasks, an employee began training on the Integrated Library System (ILS). Most employees had limited experience with the online catalog and no experience with the staff mode of the ILS. Providing behind-the-scenes information, the ILS was key to understanding the system and completing the basic duties assigned to an employee.

Beginning with a PowerPoint presentation outlining the different searching options, location codes and identifying key notes or messages in records, an employee conducted a searching project using recent donations to the

collection. This type of project provided employees with hands-on experience to familiarize themselves with the ILS system and explore possible additions to the collection. During these projects the employees asked questions about cataloging, publication information and book editions which provided an educational opportunity for the direct supervisor to expand the employees' understanding of publishing and collecting. The happy result of this aspect of their training was that employees became skilled enough to handle the first level of reference, limiting the need for assistance from professional staff.

Section 8: Processing

Employees were responsible for conducting all book processing of newly cataloged special collections material. In most institutions there are specific stages to processing, including steps involving levels of security and control, which should be conducted within the department. As with most libraries, the only way to locate material in the stacks is via a call number. When material arrived in the department, an employee was charged with checking the cataloging records for the correct location and cataloging date, which are needed to provide access to material within the department. An understanding of the ILS was required to conduct this task.

This training began with a PowerPoint presentation that discussed the different types of flags, bookplates, and labels used to process material. An employee received instructions on the workflow along with examples of the dos and don'ts of processing. After the presentation, the employee worked alongside a senior employee, to physically process new material.

The new employees implemented techniques and skills learned from other sections of training during the processing of new material. For example, the employees were expected to identify preservation concerns when an item arrived, such as the need for an enclosure. Since employees were the first to see new material entering the department, their understanding of the collection was once again enhanced, contributing to the goal of providing access.

Section 9: Public Service

Building on the skills learned in sections one through eight, this final section summarized the workflows to facilitate effective public service within a special collections department. Conducted by the direct supervisor, a PowerPoint presentation outlined general public service etiquette, public service procedures, specific policies and procedures of the reading room, and workflows for patron use of material and reproduction requests, along with basic reception duties. Then each new employee shadowed a senior employee at the information desk. Draper, Oswald, and Renfro (2007) reinforce the importance of this part of

training stating, “[O]nce a student has done the tutorials they are scheduled to work at the Information Desk with another student who is proficient at working that desk” (p. 136). This gave the new employee a chance to conduct observations and to ask questions of their peers.

Based on Standfield and Palmer’s (2010) survey, role playing scenarios and reference interview training are the most beneficial for student employees with regard to reference duties (p. 637). Senior employees conducted scenarios with the new employee. If a professional staff member was available, he or she would take part in a scenario. This was beneficial in developing the new employees’ comfort level while serving at the information desk and to simulate the workflows outlined in training. The amount of time spent on this training depended on the individual employee and his or her personal abilities. However, at this point in the program all of the employees were very excited to move to the information desk, hoping to test what they had learned through their training and to prove what they had accomplished.

Assessing Archival Collections through Surveys

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Abstract

Assessment of collections holdings through survey can be used as the first step in the larger goal to uncover archives and special collections materials that are backlogged and thus inaccessible to researchers. This article seeks to gather data on the experiences and outcomes of collections assessment surveys. The responses of thirty-three archives and special collections professionals were analyzed to discover whether a survey was an effective planning tool and to determine if similarities would emerged that could be widely applied to future collections assessments surveys.

Keywords: Access, Assessment, Backlog, Hidden collections, Processing, Surveys

Assessing Archival Collections through Surveys

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In 2003, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) held the Exposing Hidden Collections conference to focus on the issues of unprocessed, unavailable, or backlogged materials in archival and special collections repositories. Conference findings noted that “libraries collectively hold millions of items that have never been adequately described and therefore are all but unknown to, and unused by, the scholars it is our mission to serve” (Tabb, 2004, p.123). To increase access, strategies for addressing backlogs have emphasized making materials available by employing minimal description as opposed to meticulous arrangement and description. Awareness of the damaging effects of backlogs, such as the lack of preservation and the potential loss of cultural heritage materials, has grown among repositories. As a result many have begun to assess their unprocessed and under-described materials to better understand the scope of their backlog in order to plan and prioritize projects to expose collections that are effectively “hidden” to the public. The 2011 OCLC Research report, “Taking Stock and Making Hay: Archival Collections Assessment” by Martha O’Hara Conway and Merrilee Proffitt, encouraged conducting collection surveys to evaluate and systematically gather information on all holdings in order to better understand how to provide access. The report proposed the benefit of assessment through surveying, stating, “An accurate census of its archival collection enables the institution to act strategically in meeting user needs, allocating available resources and securing additional funding” (Conway & Proffitt, 2011, p.8). Despite the benefits derived from collections surveys, the practice is irregular

in archival repositories because often it cannot be completed without additional resources. The issue of collection backlog is a concern to many, if not all repositories. Reports such as Conway and Proffitt's (2011) and the large multi-repository unprocessed collection survey conducted by the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collection Libraries (PACSCL) have shown that a survey can be the first step toward the ultimate goal of increased access. In fact, archivist Gregory S. Hunter states, "surveying records is an important archival skill, but one which does not receive enough emphasis within the profession. Everything else an archivist does – appraisal, arrangement, description, reference, and outreach- presupposes the ability to locate and identify records" (Hunter, 2003, p.22).

Archivists and special collections librarians often inherit backlogs, making it likely that they are unfamiliar with the contents. Previous access may have been dependent on institutional knowledge of long-time staff. To achieve the goal of increased access including being independently discoverable by researchers, collections need description, preferably online description. Before beginning work to increase access to materials by processing collections, creating online finding aids, and collection-level catalog records, often an assessment or survey of collections is necessary to determine where and how to start. How do the experiences and results of surveying collections by archivists and special collections libraries compare? Specifically, is there was a formula or a specific survey instrument to use? What is the typical amount of time a collections assessment survey should take? What can be learned from the survey results? Did others find it to be a useful experience? This study provides descriptive research on archivists' experience with assessing collections through survey at their own institutions. By attempting to systematically gather data and compare experiences to see if common elements emerged: Are there typical results for this sort of project? What can we learn about the assessment of collections through surveys?

Collections Surveys in Literature

Interest in uncovering hidden collections which are uncatalogued or otherwise under-described, making them unknown to researchers, grew after the publication of the 1998 ARL survey of special collections libraries. Most notably the survey reported that among the 82 institutions that were polled, the mean for unprocessed manuscripts was 27 percent. Similarly, university archives, as reported from 71 institutions, indicated that 31 percent of collection materials were unprocessed. The survey reported higher percentages of unprocessed material for video (35 percent), graphic (36 percent), audio (37 percent), and artifacts (46 percent) (Panitch, 2000,

pp.49-50). This represents a significant amount of special collections and archival materials that are inaccessible to researchers because they are unprocessed or under-described. In an effort to acknowledge the problem of backlogs and seek ways to make these hidden collections visible to researchers, the ARL chaired a Special Collections Task Force, which organized 2003's Exposing Hidden Collections and published a Final Status Report on the conference findings. One position that has emerged from the conference and final report is that some access to all is preferable to no access to some. This seems to mark the movement towards minimal description as an approach to expedite availability to archival materials. To help address the problem of backlogs, the Council on Library Information and Resources (CLIR), with funding provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, created the Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program¹ to provide grants for projects "supporting innovative, efficient description of large volumes of materials of high value to scholars" (Council on Library Information and Resources "Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives, About the Program"). Projects that received funding were required to make information about the collections available online. The main requirement for funding was that "collections in question must be truly hidden, that is, not currently discoverable by scholarly users working within the relevant subject domains, either through digital or analog means" (Council on Library Information Resources, Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives, About the Program). Metadata on collections were compiled into the Hidden Collections Registry, a web-accessible platform, browsable by subject, format, or type of holding institution (Council on Library Information Resources, Hidden Collections Registry).

Gregory S. Hunter, author of *Developing and Managing Practical Archives*, encourages the use of a survey as an effective collection management tool, but advises, "Any [collection] survey, even a small one, is a complex task. It will require a great deal of time and effort, resulting in the diversion of staff time from other activities" (Hunter, 2003, p.27). Collection surveys require additional resources and in a period of reduced funding and many competing interests, the act of surveying is not a regular practice in most repositories. In order to have useful data from the survey, a clearly defined goal is a necessity. Hunter urges archivists to use the results of the survey as a planning tool for the repository's programs by identifying priorities for the future and gathering resources that will be needed to reach those goals. However, Hunter cautions that "To spend time on a survey without using the results for institutional planning is a squandering of resources. Similarly, to plan for an archival program without having an accurate survey of existing records and storage

1. CLIR's Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program was discontinued in December 2014.

conditions is to risk the failure of the entire effort” (Hunter, 2003, p. 30). Collection assessment by survey is a time-intensive exercise, but allows an archivist to establish physical and intellectual control over collections, which results in a clearer idea of the scope and needs of the materials.

However, few universal guidelines exist for conducting a collection survey. Conway and Proffitt in “Taking Stock and Making Hay” (2011) acknowledge that a single approach does not exist and would not be practical to fit the needs of every repository. Instead, Appendix A of the report summarizes fourteen collection survey projects successfully undertaken² by various institutions and provides links to their websites containing the project documentation and survey models which can be borrowed and adapted to suit a range of survey projects. Conway and Proffitt express their hope that the report motivates those who are interested in using a survey to assess their collections by suggesting an array of possibilities that can be readily applied to meet immediate and/or long-term needs” (Conway & Proffitt, 2011, p.8).

Method: Collections Assessment Survey Questionnaire (CASQ)

While several repositories have completed assessments of their collections by survey, there has not been specific information in literature that addresses the experiences and findings of these surveys at other repositories. It is possible to presume their experiences and findings by the type of projects conducted after their survey. For example, PACSCL at the conclusion of their survey initiative received funding to process collections and create online descriptions. Several of the collection survey projects identified in “Taking Stock and Making Hay”(2011) had launched project blogs that indicated a move towards applying More Product, Less Process (MPLP) principles and/or cataloging the formerly unprocessed collections. However, as of this study there has not been literature that addressed the experience of conducting a collections assessment survey and the impact upon the institution.

What types of data did others gather in a collection assessment survey? Is there a more efficient way of conducting a collection assessment survey? Would others have conducted their surveys differently if they had known methodology employed by other institutions? Can answers to these questions reveal any consistencies in order to establish guidelines for conducting a collections survey? To find a sample of archivists or special collections librarians that have conducted or participated in collection surveys, messages³ were posted on two of the Society of American Archivists’ (SAA) Roundtables email discussion lists: the Lone

2. Or in progress at the time “Taking Stock and Making Hay: Archival Collections Assessment” was published in 2011.

3. See Appendix I for text of the messages.

Arrangers Roundtable and the Students and New Archives Professional (SNAP) Roundtables. The two SAA Roundtables were selected because of previous discussion regarding internal archival inventories on the Lone Arrangers list and the suggestion that, because the SNAP Roundtable focus on students and early career professionals, members would have been likely to have participated in an assessment of collection materials as a surveyor. The posting invited those who had conducted or participated in a collection survey to complete an online questionnaire hosted by Survey Monkey.

Prior to the study, approval was received from The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board to conduct the survey with members of the two SAA Roundtable discussion lists. Those who responded remained anonymous and no identifying information was collected. All participants self-identified as having previously completed or as being in the process of conducting a collections survey by agreeing to answer the questions. The Collection Assessment Survey Questionnaire (CASQ) consisted of 14 questions, seven of which were free-text answers in order to elicit responses on the participant's experiences in their own words. The other seven were multiple choice questions designed to allow participants to choose more than one answer as well as contribute free-text comments to place their selections in context. The survey was live from June 25 to August 8, 2014. Thirty-three respondents participated, of which 25 completed the entire survey. Incomplete responses included only the multiple choices questions and skipped the more descriptive free-text responses, so there was still data that could be analyzed. Admittedly, the sample size was small, but the CASQ was designed as a descriptive research survey to depict a representative sample of experiences and provide insight into the process and impact of collections surveys.

Results: Collection Assessment Survey Questionnaire Findings

About 66 percent of the respondents indicated that a collection survey was used to assess the entire holdings, including both unprocessed and processed materials of any format, while about 18 percent chose to use a collection survey only to assess materials of specific formats such as electronic records, architectural drawings, or sacramental registers. About 6 percent reported that they used their surveys only to assess materials in a specific subject area.

The catalysts for conducting a collections survey varied among the participants. Some respondents cited assessing backlog, preservation needs, and updating inventories. Others undertook surveys at that

particular time in order to locate materials for an upcoming institutional anniversary, to clear materials from a storage space, or simply to take advantage of part-time help during the summer months. The answers all indicated that the principal goal for the collection survey was to gain intellectual and physical control of their repository’s materials. When respondents were specifically asked, “Question 2: Briefly select the reasons for conducting an internal survey (please check all that all apply),” the highest percentage, 78 percent, chose the answer “to gain intellectual control.” The second most popular answer was “To gain physical control” at 69 percent. (See Table I below.)

Answer Choices	Percentage	Number of Responses
To identify unprocessed or under-processed materials or backlogged materials	66.67%	22
To identify material in need of preservation or conservation	60.61%	20
To gain intellectual control	78.79%	26
To gain physical control	69.70%	23
To identify collection strengths and opportunities to expand collecting efforts	39.39%	13

Table I. Question 2, Briefly select the reasons for conducting an internal survey (check all that apply)
[33 Answered; 0 Skipped]

Interestingly, one respondent shared that in addition to wanting to gain better physical and intellectual control, undertaking a survey was also motivated by donors. The respondent explains:

“The effort was also inspired by the occasional donor wanting to see the collection he/she donated at some point in the past, but as there had been no accessioning or cataloging procedures I often could not locate them (nor confirm we had ever had them). If materials were found they were not in very good shape. This became a little embarrassing. So the survey was also done in an effort to restore the faith of these donors and show potential donors that we took our role as stewards of these materials seriously” (Participant #17).

Question 4 asked participants to select the types of information gathered in their survey, choosing from a list of 21 fields (see Table II). The most frequent responses were format and location of materials (89.3 percent), followed the by extent or quantity (85.7 percent), physical

condition (75 percent), creator and title (both 71.4 percent), and subject of collection tied with the availability of unpublished finding aid or other container list (both 35 percent). This selection represents the most commonly gathered information fields from the respondents' surveys. The other types of information gathered were specific to the individual survey and repository, such as recording the physical dimensions of oversized artwork. One respondent indicated inclusion of a field to record if a collection contained materials related to a prominent individual or historical event at their university.

Participants were asked to describe the physical steps used to collect the information. All respondents indicated that they assessed materials directly within the collection storage space. One used the term "hunting" to describe locating materials in various storage areas. In conjunction

Answer Choice	Percentage	Number of Responses
Creator	71.43%	20
Title	71.43%	20
Inclusive or bulk dates	60.71%	17
Extent or quantity	85.71%	24
Format of materials	89.29%	25
Location of materials	89.29	25
Brief Collection abstract	28.57%	8
Subject of collection	35.71%	10
Physical condition	75.00%	21
Availability of catalog record	32.14%	9
Availability of online finding aid	25.00%	7
Availability of unpublished finding aid or other container list	35.7%	10
Related materials	25.00%	7
Access restrictions	28.57%	8
Copyright restrictions	7.14%	2
Expected collection growth	21.43%	6
Language	21.43%	6
Processing status	42.86%	12
Numerical Rankings	10.71%	3
Provenance	39.29%	11
Other (not on list)	21.43%	6

Table II. Question 4, Please list the fields used in the survey (check all that apply):
[28 Answered; 5 Skipped]

with the physical inspection of each box, respondents also gathered existing inventories and paper files to reconcile what was known or what had been done previously to the collection. One respondent indicated the need to examine contents thoroughly because of a lack of documentation. Some took initial action along the way to box up loose materials, refile misfiled items, amend information, and rehouse materials.

Several of the respondents indicated they were able to take a laptop in their stacks and enter information directly into the template. Most respondents used a paper form of the survey to jot down observations, later transcribing and entering them into a software program. Most respondents (62.5 percent) used Excel spreadsheets to organize their information; programs such as Access and File Maker Pro, were not widely used, each with 4.17 percent. Other systems such as Lotus Notes and PB Works Wiki were used because their larger institution used the software. Paper was the second most selected answer at 29.17 percent. One respondent stated that paper forms were used because their volunteer surveyors were not comfortable with computers. Another respondent indicated that their repository did not have access to a database program and thus used a paper form and later created a Word document. Several stated they were able to enter the survey information directly into Archivists' Toolkit.

Respondents reported an average of two full-time staff members and one part-time staff member working on their collection survey (see Table III). Assistance from students and volunteers was also used at an average of eight hours per week. Since the availability of students and volunteers can vary, the questionnaire asked respondents to estimate. The estimate of the number of hours all persons spent working on the survey varied greatly among respondents. Answers ranged from a total of eight hours to 5,000 hours. The reasons for such disparity could be due to several factors including the extent of collections, physical state of the materials, complexity of information encountered, and individual pace, but respondents did not elaborate on this. According to the CASQ, respondents estimated that all staff members working on the survey spent an average of 914 hours to complete the survey. Despite the wide range of hours, the investment of time and labor was significant. In addition to physically inspecting each container, some participants also researched previous data collected about the materials, reconciling legacy inventories, and several respondents mentioned interviewing current and former staff for their institutional memories concerning archival collections. A collection survey is a time investment and often additional resources are involved. As Participant #19 described the reaction of their repository, "There's been some dismay at the amount of time it took, but it demonstrated how much needs to be done with the collection."

Although there was a large investment of time, the self-reported results indicated that half of the respondents considered themselves “very satisfied” with the outcomes of their survey, and 66 percent agreed that the survey had achieved all the goals it had set out to complete (see Tables III and IV).

According to the respondents, gaining a better understanding of their collections, including physical and intellectual control, was the most successful aspect of the survey. When asked “Question 13, What was the biggest challenge you faced in conducting their survey,” answers generally

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Very Satisfied	50%	13
Satisfied	38.46%	10
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11.54%	3
Dissatisfied	0%	0
Very Dissatisfied	0%	0

Table III. Question 10, How satisfied are you with the results of your survey? [26 Answered; 7 Skipped]

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
It achieved all the goals	66.67%	16
It achieved some of the goals	33.33%	8
It did not achieve the goals	0%	0

Table IV. Question 11, Did your survey achieve the goals described in question #3? [24 Answered; 9 Skipped]

touched upon limited resources (both of time and staff) for what was a large task, and respondents indicated that finding time to work on the survey was the biggest challenge they faced. Another common challenge for the respondents was the very little or non-existent provenance information on the collections. Answers included:

“Complexity of and incorrect information recorded for many collections, and messy accession information have slowed this all down” (Participant #12);

“What seemed to me to be an idiosyncratic filing system in place (collections based on topics, not provenance)” (Participant #5);

“Collections with little accession information” (Participant #20);

“The complete lack of records from the previous archivist’s tenure was also a real challenge” (Participant #13);

Interestingly, one respondent experienced resistance from staff regarding the necessity of conducting a survey. Colleagues with more seniority felt they could find everything, so they felt it was a waste of time (Participant #30). Disorganization combined with little provenance information also challenged respondents. Another difficulty experienced by many was the challenge of being unfamiliar with the materials, because they did not understand the significance of obscure terms or persons found within the unprocessed materials until after they had processed the collections. Likewise, unfamiliarity with the repository made it difficult to ascertain the corporate structure of the organization and create a records retention schedule. One respondent reported the challenge of training students and the need to impress upon them the importance of understanding what they would see, since theirs might be the only eyes on the item for decades.

Generally, the reaction from the respondents’ supervisors or institutions to the outcomes of the surveys was positive. The answers indicated that supervisors were mostly pleased with the improved access to collections and unprocessed materials by the public and by the staff. One respondent noted a great response by faculty to using “new” materials in the archives (Question 14, Participant #21). Other responses from supervisors and institutions were more neutral stating that the survey was “just something that needs to be done” (Question 14, Participant #2).

Discussion

Collection Assessment Survey Questionnaire

An analysis of the qualitative responses confirmed the assumption that surveys were effective planning tools. Respondents shared that unknown collections were identified, processing projects were planned, items were earmarked for preservation, and publishable collection metadata had been created as a result of the survey. The CASQ results revealed the impact of collection survey results on allocation of resources, especially in terms of physical storage space. One respondent stated that they used the information gathered in the collection survey in order to estimate the shelving needs of a new space. Likewise, one respondent used the survey results to determine cold storage needs for audiovisual materials.

Another indicated that the collection survey was done in order to shift materials around to better utilize their current space. Additional responses echoed these sentiments, that results from the surveys were used to make decisions about storage needs. It seems that physical storage space can influence many decisions in a repository. One respondent explains, “The archives was [sic] set up by a volunteer with very limited knowledge of any archival theory or practices. As it exists now, it is almost unusable and needs to be reconfigured in a way that can support growth while retaining the original order. The survey was the first step in this process” (Participant #4).

CASQ findings also indicated that results were used to tighten the scope of collections. Participant #30 used the collection survey results to sort materials out of their storage space that did not belong to archives or were better suited to be “moved to other parts of the library.” Another, Participant #9, stated that as a result of their collection survey they were able to identify materials that needed to be returned to donors.⁴ Respondent #28 stated one the goals for conducting a collection survey was “to identify out-of-scope collections.” Similarly, another used the results of the survey to “create records retention schedule in order to do disposition based on the retention schedule” (Participant #16). The survey results helped several respondents to assess collecting areas to develop and which areas could be weeded.

An additional impact of the survey for several respondents was that it functioned as a tool to transfer or gain institutional knowledge. The respondents stated:

“Our current college archivist has been here since 1986 and knows the collections in and out. But beyond his brain, there was little-to-no intellectual control over the holdings” (Participant #5).

“As a newly-appointed archivist, I needed to know what materials were in the archives. I was only the second person in the position, and the previous archivist had left no inventories or collection information at all” (Participant #15).

“As the first full-time archivists, no complete inventory had ever been performed on the collection” (Participant #21).

“I assumed responsibility for processing collections after a colleague left, and the director of the archive was recently transferred in, so we could [both] become more familiar with our holdings” (Participant #20).

4. The archive only held parish registers from closed churches; parish registers from still operating churches needed to be returned as they were out of scope.

Besides systematically gathering data about collections in order to have consistent and adequate description, a collection survey can also be used as an immersive experience for a new archivist to gain institutional knowledge and document that information for others.

CASQ Impact

The purpose of the CASQ was to gather data on the experiences of conducting a survey to determine if there were similarities which could be applied widely to other collections assessment surveys. The CASQ results did reveal some common elements. A majority of respondents assessed their entire holdings as opposed to surveying just unprocessed collections or materials of a specific format. The main catalyst for conducting a survey among the respondents was to gain intellectual and physical control over collections. While the CASQ results did not indicate a specific survey instrument or model, some common elements of the types of information were gathered, such as format, location, extent and physical conditions of the materials. Additional types of information such as the availability of an online finding aid or physical dimensions were unique to the specific repository and its holdings. No specific formula or guidelines were uncovered through the CASQ findings. The results of a survey are largely dependent on the repository's goals. Many of the respondents did indicate that they lacked any data for their collections, or that the data was incorrect or incomplete. In order to move forward to accomplish the larger goal of increasing access, consistent collection-level data was required. Most often the survey was the necessary step before a larger plan could be developed. This recalls the statement in "Taking Stock and Making Hay" that an accurate census of materials allows an "institution to act strategically in meeting user needs and allocating available resources and securing additional funding" (Conway & Proffitt, 2011, p.3). The CASQ also identified several secondary collection benefits resulting from the survey. Results of the collections surveys were used to evaluate future physical storage space needs and reconfigure existing space for growth. Several respondents reported that their results assisted in tightening the scope of collections and identified materials to be deaccessioned or transferred. Responses did not indicate a typical amount of time required to complete a survey. The CASQ found that the total hours spent on a survey varied greatly.

A majority of the respondents rated their collections survey as having achieved all its goals. Remarkably, none of the respondents reported that their survey failed to achieve any goals. Similarly, half of the respondents rated themselves very satisfied, while none reported that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the results of their collections survey. These results seem to indicate that respondents found the survey to be a useful experience.

Limitations of the CASQ Study

Following discussion from the SAA Lone Arrangers Roundtable, the CASQ was initially designed as a small survey focused on library professionals in institutions with small staffs. While the results seem to indicate the survey was an effective tool, possibilities for further research into the topic would involve increasing the number of respondents to see if the results are applicable to a larger sample. It would also be useful to break down results based on the size of the institutions. Data from the experiences of surveys at large research libraries could introduce variables that were not considered by smaller institutions. Future research into collection assessment by survey should gather data on the institution size. It is also important to note that the CASQ revealed that respondents did not all use the same methodology when conducting surveys at their own repositories. Slight variations among the respondents could have significant impact upon experiences and results. Another limitation of the CASQ was in the lack of detail on the estimated staff hours spent on the survey. Follow-up research should break down the number of hours spent by part-time staff and by full-time staff and compare the hours with the number of collections that were surveyed to account more accurately for the average amount of time it took to complete the survey.

Conclusion

Awareness of the damaging effects of backlogged or hidden collections has made increasing access to archival and special collections materials a priority among many repositories. As the first step to increase access, many institutions have used collections surveys to assess all types of materials within their care to better understand the needs of the backlogged materials and to plan and prioritize projects that will uncover these collections. The surveys function as a systematic method to gather consistent collection data in order to prioritize, plan, and create descriptive information. An immediate result of the collections survey is better intellectual control by providing the percentage of processed and unprocessed collections. The surveys had a secondary benefit as a method to document the institutional knowledge of long-time staff.

In order to find out what can be learned from collections assessment surveys, the CASQ reached out to professionals who had completed their own collections surveys in order to elicit their experiences. Responses to the CASQ indicated that many institutions also found assessment through collection surveys to be an effective planning tool. While the results did not reveal a consistent survey instrument or typical timeline for surveying

a collection, results of the surveys allowed the majority respondents to better understand the needs of their collections and allocate resources. The results of the CASQ can be considered the first step to analyze experiences conducting collection assessment surveys. Further research into this topic could reveal more insights and lead to developing a set of best practices. Suggestions for further study include expanding the respondent sample, specifically including participants from larger research libraries. The CASQ form should be revised to document institutional size of repository to study its effects. In future research, a deeper exploration of the variations in assessment of hidden collection survey methodologies could provide additional useful data regarding the survey experience.

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Appendix I

Initial Survey (CASQ) Administered via Survey Monkey-Email Invitation:

Call for Volunteers: Survey on methods used in conducting an internal archival inventory

Hello Colleagues: Happy Friday!

Have you conducted or participated in an internal archival inventory? If so, I need your help!

My name is Wendy Pflug and I am an associate curator/archivist at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum at Ohio State University. Last month's discussion on conducting an internal archival inventory brought many great responses from those who have conducted a survey and much helpful advice for those beginning or in the midst of an inventory survey. Following a research interest of mine, I am seeking to survey other archivists who have conducted an internal survey of their repository's collections and materials, in order to find how it was done and what impact it had. Below is a link to a short survey (14 questions, many multiple choice, which will take about 20 minutes) asking what types of materials were surveyed, the reasons for conducting an internal inventory, what types of information was gathered, and the final results. The goal of these questions is to find out what information is needed to conduct an effective inventory survey and to articulate the impact it can have on a repository. My intention is to write an article based on these questions that will (hopefully) be a resource for other colleagues beginning their inventories from scratch and to enhance our understanding of what sort of information could be considered effective. If you have any questions or concerns about the study and survey please contact the Principle Investigator, Wendy Pflug at pflug.9@osu.edu or by phone 614-292-0538.

Please note: the survey questions will not ask identifying information such as your name or workplace; all answers will be anonymous. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research at 1-800-678-6251.

Thanks in advance for your help with my research!

Appendix II

Survey Questions

Responses for all questions are available.

1. Did the survey inventory the entire holdings within the repository or did the survey focus on materials of a specific format or subject, or other criteria?
2. Briefly select the reasons for conducting an internal survey (check all that apply)
3. Can you describe your goals for conducting the survey?
4. Please list the fields used in the survey (check all that apply):
5. What were the physical steps or procedures used to collect the information for the fields?
6. How did you organize the results of the descriptive information?
7. What did you or your organization do with the results of the survey?
8. Please estimate the number of staff hours it took to complete this survey:
9. Please estimate the number of items and/or number of collections surveyed
10. How satisfied are you with the results of your survey?
11. Did your survey achieve the goals described in question #3?
12. What was the most successful aspect or aspects of your survey?
13. What was the biggest challenge you faced in conducting the survey?
14. Please describe the response of your institution to the survey

Read a Zine, Then Make One, Then Catalog it: Creating a Zine Library at SUNY New Paltz

Madeline Veitch, SUNY New Paltz

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Abstract

Zines are self-published, low-budget printed, ephemeral works, motivated by a desire to share ideas of all kinds—personal reflections, political essays, how-to instructions, and more. During spring 2014, several undergraduate students and a metadata and reference librarian collaborated to create a zine library at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz. In the years that followed, they received a small programming grant, organized zine readings and how-to workshops, developed an interactive social media presence, and created a zine library intern position.

Keywords: zines, student collaboration, student authors, programming, outreach, collection development

Read a Zine, Then Make One, Then Catalog it: Creating a Zine Library at SUNY New Paltz

Madeline Veitch, SUNY New Paltz

What is a zine? This is a question heard many times since the SUNY New Paltz Zine Library began, and one that always takes some time to answer. My favorite response, which comes from Stephan Duncombe's 2008 book, *Notes from the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*, is to let the inquirer arrive at their own conclusion. As Duncombe tells it, "my initial, and probably correct, impulse is to hand over a stack of zines and let the person asking the question decide, for this is how they were introduced to me" (p. 6).



Figure 1. Zines from the SUNY New Paltz Zine Library. Image courtesy of the New Paltz Zine Library, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.

Time and circumstances don't always allow for this kind of hands-on encounter, so staff have come up with talking points to introduce this latest special collection at the Sojourner Truth Library. Zines are self-published, typically on a low budget, with authors laying out spreads on their own computers, or by cutting and pasting text onto a master document that is then photocopied and distributed. Zine creators, sometimes referred to as *zinesters*, are generally motivated by a desire to share ideas, not to amass profit from the sale of their work. They often sell their zines at cost, trade them, or give them away.

If these are some broad (but certainly not exclusive) parameters, the actual content of a zine knows no such bounds. A zine can be a collection of political essays, a how-to manual, a comic book, or a personal narrative. It may include art, be printed in color or black and

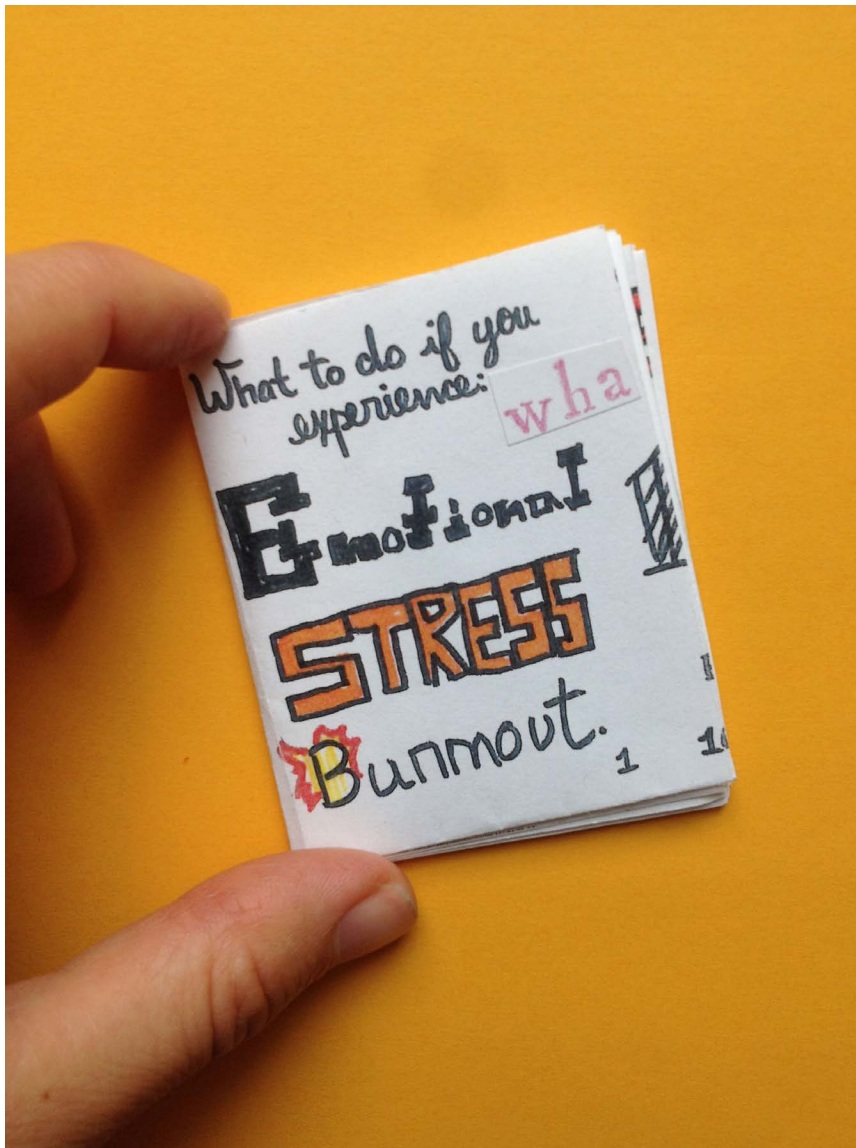


Figure 2. What to Do if You Experience Emotional Stress Burnout. By Jordan Alam, 2011. Image courtesy of the New Paltz Zine Library, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.

white, bound by hand or stapled at the fold with a long arm stapler. Zines can feature hand-colored illustrations, deluxe audio companions, screen-printed covers, and vary considerably in size (the smallest zine in our collection, Jordan Alam's *What to Do if You Experience Emotional Stress Burnout*, measures approximately 7 x 5.5 cm). They can be as breathtakingly beautiful as one of their semantic neighbors, the artists' book, or entirely functional, like a simple pamphlet.

I was compelled to start a zine collection at SUNY New Paltz, the 4-year comprehensive college where I serve as metadata and reference librarian, after Barnard College zine librarian Jenna Freedman and artist and author Jacinta Bunnell presented on our campus in February 2014. Freedman has been a leader in the zine library world for over a decade, creating invaluable web resources for other zine librarians and contributing to efforts to organize and collaborate across collections. In addition to creating zines, Bunnell is the author of well-known radical coloring books including *Girls Are Not Chicks* (2009) and *The Big Gay Alphabet Coloring Book* (2015). In February 2014, our University Writing Board provided organizational and financial support to bring them to campus. Together, Bunnell and Freedman offered an afternoon workshop on how to make zines and an evening lecture entitled "Make Your Own Culture: Who Zine Creators Are, Why They Do What They Do, and Why it Matters."¹

As Stoddart and Kiser (2004) suggest, many zines present "a first-person attempt to decipher and decode the world" (p. 193). In the context of an academic library, zines suggest to a user-community of predominately undergraduate students that they themselves could be authors, and their ideas are equally as worthy of an audience as the books that fill the stacks. In reference and instruction work, I have increasingly situated my definition of peer review in a critical framework that challenges and seeks to democratize the concept of "expert" knowledge. The zine library allows me to reinforce this by telling students: we want your writing—*your* ideas—for the library collection, just as much as the latest university press anthology. Since the zine library's inception, over forty students have contributed to the collection, providing their own summaries and keywords to guide choice of subject headings for the catalog records. Their zines sit on shelves near the main floor periodicals area for anyone to pick up and read. In her 2008 article "Why Zines Matter: Materiality and the Creation of Embodied Community," author Allison Piepmeier clarified the impact of sharing actual print copies of zines on student participation in her classes:

1. Slides from this talk are available on Slideshare at <http://www.slideshare.net/jenna/newpaltz>

My students have been inspired to become part of the zine community because of physical encounters with actual zines, not by reading anthologized zines. In a world where more and more of us spend all day at our computers, zines reconnect us to our bodies and other human beings. (p. 214)

Education scholar Joe Kincheloe suggested, “critical pedagogy is dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering,” particularly in its focus on the experiences of those who are silenced by the dominant culture (2004, p. 11). Zines can give voice to those experiences and share resources for creating change, bringing a critical lens into the library where personal narratives are often muffled or muted by the scholarly discourse in which they are embedded. Users may find their own concerns reflected on the photocopied page. They may also gain new insights that inform developing social critiques, or critiques of their chosen field of study.

In keeping with a critical pedagogical framework, the zine library at SUNY New Paltz developed as a collaborative project undertaken with students, as opposed to a top-down offering from the library to the campus. At Freedman and Bunnell’s presentation, I connected with several students who were involved with zines (both as makers and as readers) and started an email list of those interested in starting a zine club or campus project of some kind. The community that evolved out of this initial group of contacts was instrumental to building and promoting the zine library and has been active in nearly every part of its maintenance and growth.

The New Paltz Zine Library: a Proposal

In early spring of 2014, I presented a short proposal for a zine collection to Mark Colyson, Dean of the Sojourner Truth Library at SUNY New Paltz. Knowing that librarian time and institutional budgets were already stretched thin, I envisioned a collection that compromised access in order to conserve time and resources. To limit processing and preservation costs, the collection would be for browsing in the library only. Zines would not be cataloged in our ILS, but tracked in a spreadsheet and inventoried periodically. As Stoddart and Kiser (2004) found in their survey of zines in libraries, zines are sometimes cataloged, but often outside of an ILS or within an ILS but described at the collection level only. While I was confident that users would stumble on an un-cataloged collection, I did lament what would have been a missed opportunity to collocate zines with other research materials. Thankfully, the Dean disagreed with my proposal

to leave the collection un-cataloged, allowing me to commit some of my time to original and copy cataloging. Ultimately the zine library has been fully integrated into our ILS, significantly enhancing discoverability.

In “Your Zine Tool Kit, a DIY Collection,” Freedman suggests a start-up budget of \$500 for a new zine library. Following this suggestion allowed us to purchase the zines and display materials needed to establish a small collection.² The majority of zines are priced somewhere between free and ten dollars, which in many cases covers little more than the author’s copying and mailing costs.³ How to select zines for the collection was a more challenging question, one that the students helped to answer. Especially in the first year of the zine library, a student group which had formed out of discussions at Freedman and Bunnell’s presentation met regularly to talk about zine making and the development of the zine library. In the early meetings of what was then called the Zine Collective, I collaborated with the students to craft a collection development policy for the zine library.

We agreed that zines dealing with identity or intersections of identity were a good fit for our campus; SUNY New Paltz has a number of academic programs that address issues related to identity (Black Studies, Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Deaf Studies to name a few) and a student body that is engaged in conversations about identity, power, and oppression. We also agreed that including zines with strong visual elements would serve the interests of our undergraduate and graduate Fine Arts programs. DIY or “do it yourself” instructional zines were included as they represent an important genre in the zine universe. Zines locally produced, both by students on our campus and throughout the Hudson Valley, were a high priority.

When I presented the collection development policy to the library faculty, there was general support and enthusiasm for the project: one librarian suggested that it would be better suited to a public library environment, but providing evidence of similar collections at peer institutions allayed concerns. The only suggested change to the policy itself was that we include zines that address sustainability as an environmental and energy-use concept. SUNY New Paltz hired a sustainability coordinator in May 2013 and has been actively working toward creating a more environmentally conscious and sustainable campus. Including zines that deal with related issues seemed like a good way to reflect this campus-wide priority. The final collection development policy for the zine library, approved by the library faculty in April 2014, is as follows:

2. It’s worth noting that the \$500 estimate was made by Jenna Freedman in 2006 dollars, and that since we received this initial investment from Sojourner Truth Library we have been able to integrate zine collection development into the general print budget, allowing us to continue purchasing zines.

3. Artist’s books, a category that overlaps some with zines, can be considerably more expensive.

As defined by the Barnard College Zine Library, 'A zine is a self-publication, motivated by a desire for self-expression, not for profit.' The Zine Collection at the Sojourner Truth Library touches several distinct topical areas of importance to the campus and wider New Paltz community. Among these are zines that address intersections of gender, sexuality, race, ability, and identity, particularly in a larger political, social or economic context. Other areas include environmental or sustainability-related topics, how-to zines, and zines that express strong visual or fine arts elements. Local zines, and zines produced by New Paltz community members are heavily collected, while equal efforts are made to draw from unique or under-represented voices from across the country.

Initially, I was a bit concerned that we were being too broad in our policy, so I contacted other zine libraries to learn more about how they approached collection development. Through these informal conversations, I found that libraries employ a significant range of practices. Some had carefully defined policies that had been fine-tuned over the years; others accepted almost any zine (this was especially true of collections that relied exclusively on donations). Given that our collection is new and resources are limited, we have been slightly more relaxed in applying the policy to donated items, but adhere to it closely when purchasing zines with library funds.

Collaborative Collection Development and Description

After co-creating our collection development policy, students involved in the project began to populate a shared spreadsheet with requests for zines they felt we should purchase. Together we read reviews, located zines seen or heard through personal connections, and selected titles from zine "distros" (online distributors that sell zines produced by multiple authors, anywhere from a few to dozens). I worked with the collection development librarian and acquisition clerks to order many of these online, and purchased dozens more at the Brooklyn Zine Fest and other zine-related events.

I quickly realized I would not be able to catalog all the zines myself and keep up with my regular cataloging work and reference responsibilities. In a show of support, the library funded two zine library interns at four hours each per week for the summer of 2014, and has continued to support one (and occasionally two) interns per semester ever since. By working with these students, all of whom were zine-makers and readers themselves, the collection began to take shape.

The zine library interns and I used a relay workflow to catalog zines: for titles requiring original records, interns entered metadata in a Google spreadsheet broken down by MARC fields, and I reviewed entries and transferred them into an OCLC record. Along the way, we built a list of local subject headings, drawing on a zine thesaurus created by the Anchor Archive in Halifax, Canada. Some Library of Congress Subject Headings have been sufficient to describe the collection and we use these whenever possible to collocate zines with books and other media in our library-wide holdings, but there are cases where the language used by a particular community is not accurately reflected in LCSH. Anchor Archive headings like “queer identity,” “ableism,” and “body politics” have allowed us to describe important concepts in zines and ensure language used by readers and researchers is reflected in the catalog records for these items.⁴ Borrowing heavily from Barnard College Zine Library’s genre descriptions, we also developed our own high-level categories for organizing the zine library (e.g. personal zines, DIY zines, minicomics), so users might browse categories in addition to entering topical keyword and subject searches. To make locally produced zines discoverable, the heading “Hudson Valley zines” is applied to works from the region, and “School zines” to any zine made for course credit.⁵

Outreach and Programming

Promotion of the zine library began in 2014 with campus emails and a Facebook page which has been maintained by zine library interns. Zine collective students also designed buttons and stickers to distribute at events.

In the first year, we applied for and received a \$500 grant from College Auxiliary Services to provide programming related to the collection, which funded three events: an evening zine reading, a two-hour workshop where participants would learn how to get started making cut and paste zines, and a more advanced tutorial on using Adobe InDesign for zine layout. We also began taking a “pop-up” library to events, and collaborating with faculty to bring zines into the classroom.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the number of librarian and paid intern hours devoted to the zine library grew considerably as another librarian, Lydia Willoughby, joined the project and we were able to hire two zine library interns to work simultaneously for the spring semester. This growth in numbers and devoted time facilitated a significant expansion in outreach and programming. We collaborated on zine-making/reading events with several student organizations and the Graphic Design program, increased course-related instructions, added an Instagram

4. For a discussion of ethical concerns around zine librarianship, including issues around cataloging, and collocation see *Zine Librarians Code of Ethics Zine*, accessible as printable PDF at zinelibraries.info/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EthicsZine-rev-20151105.pdf or bit.ly/zineethics

5. This heading is borrowed from Barnard College Zine Library although we may defined its scope in a slightly different way.

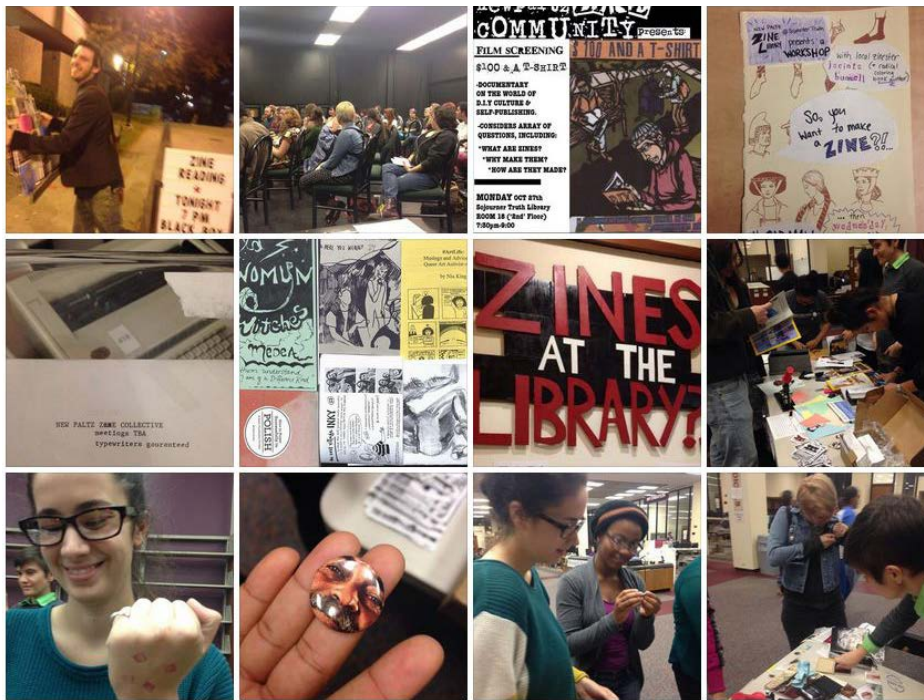


Figure 3. New Paltz Zine Library Facebook Group, Screen capture of photo library grid, November 2014. Image courtesy of the New Paltz Zine Library, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.



Figure 4. Buttons designed by Portia Melita and Brian Sarco and digitally edited by Crystal Zoodsma, 2014. Image courtesy of the New Paltz Zine Library, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.

account, and replaced what was a very clunky zine library LibGuide with a WordPress site.⁶ The intention of the new website is for collection communication (who we are, kinds of programming offered). It also serves as a point of contact, inviting submission of zines for inclusion in the collection, instruction requests, and requests for one-on-one consultations about zines and zine-making.

6. See New Paltz Zine Library website at <http://hawksites.newpaltz.edu/zines/>.

Across all programming and outreach efforts, communicating what zines are and the kinds of opportunities they provide for author agency, connection, and self-expression has been essential. We have endeavored to achieve this by “showing” as often as “telling”: bringing zines into new spaces and using them to start conversations. We created a small zine about zines to serve as another tool, and in the future hope to run a flyer campaign highlighting the collection and its offerings to the campus and community.

Zine Library Interns

It is the creativity and dedication of our zine library interns that drives programming and outreach. The interns are paid library student staff working between 3-4 hours a week; most semesters we have one, but for two (nonconsecutive) terms we have hired two, allowing valuable programmatic growth and maintenance of institutional memory. The interns have helped set our course for the collection, facilitating new relationships with student groups, classes, and guest speakers. They have also developed workshop ideas and co-led instruction both in and beyond the classroom. Over the past year, they helped develop our mission and vision, organize content for a new website, and develop policy for a zine kit project we are piloting in fall 2016.

In spring 2016, Kelly Lindberg, an intern who worked with us for over a year, elected to take on additional internship hours for credit toward her major in Digital Media and Journalism. During that time, she created a short film about the history and significance of the New Paltz Zine Library in the lives of students, faculty, and alumni. This film, accompanied by a short zine, became an honor’s thesis project.⁷ Lindberg shared selections from the film at conferences hosted by the State University of New York Library Association (SUNYLA) and the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council (SENYLRC).

We have been fortunate to have funding for zine library interns during lean budget years. The position value can be articulated in the language of the College’s strategic plan, which calls for the establishment of “an engaged living and learning community,” and stronger “regional and community engagement” (SUNY New Paltz, 2013).

Zine Readings

While zines often facilitate a private exchange of art and ideas, hosting public readings has increased visibility and community engagement. Inviting readers to share not only their own zines but other zines from

7. The film, *Aboveground and the Underground Converge: The New Paltz Zine Library*, is available for streaming

the collection helps to inspire participation across the spectrum of readers and authors, and encourages readers to become authors. At our first reading in the fall of 2014, four readers presented their own zines and the remaining five shared zines from the collection, including *The Unlikely -- Yet True -- Love of Nikola Tesla and Captain Ahab*, and *How to Swear Successfully in Polish: a Basic Vocabulary Primer*. We held the event at the campus black box theater, and set up a document camera so readers could project any portions of the zines they wanted to highlight (illustrations, spread layouts, etc.) As the readers turned pages under the camera and prefaced selected passages and illustrations with their own reflections, the audience was folded into a personal encounter with the zine.⁸ While most readers were current students, we had extended a special invitation to Kate Larson, author of the personal zine *No Better than Apples*. Larson is well-known in zine communities on the East Coast and beyond, and also a New Paltz alumna and early supporter of the zine library who started making zines while a student at New Paltz.

Subsequent readings have been more informal and paired with other events, as have our pop-up libraries, which bring curated selections from the collection into an array of spaces on campus and in the community. At campus student fairs and orientation events, our goal has been to facilitate first encounters with zines and encourage engagement with the collection. Topical pop-ups have included a selection of environmental zines shared in the foyer outside a lecture on sustainability, LGBTQ+ zines brought to a trans* issues conference, and feminist zines highlighted at an off-campus book talk and music event about the riot grrl movement.

Zine Workshops

Since the zine library's inception, we have held four stand-alone workshops on creating zines and collaborated with several student organizations incorporating zine-making into existing programming or club meetings. While most of our workshops focus on the cut and paste method of creating zines, collaboration with the Graphic Design program and a guest lecture by book designer Darla Stabler has provided guidance for laying out zines using Adobe InDesign.

At the fall 2014 workshop, local artist and zinester Jacinta Bunnell introduced participants to some of the tools and practices of cut and paste zine-making.

The majority of students in attendance had never made a zine before; many were there out of curiosity, and a few for extra credit offered by faculty teaching related courses. Bunnell asked students to look at zines

8. This format for simultaneously "showing" and reading is one I first saw employed by artists's book maker and Art Library Technical Assistant Josh Hockensmith at an event he organized at UNC Chapel Hill's Sloane Art Library on September 14th, 2010.

NEW PALTZ ZINE LIBRARY (@ STL) PRESENTS

A WORKSHOP:

LEARN HOW TO MAKE



A ZINE

With local zinester

and radical coloring book author

Jacinta Bunnell

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19th 6:30-8:30PM

Old Main Room 1907 (lower floor)

Yes, but what IS a ZINE?

In a few words, it's a self-published pamphlet motivated by the desire to share writing with others – it can be anything from a series of political essays to poems or comics. All you need is a copy machine, and a desire to get your ideas out there!

All Materials Provided

Want more info?

[Facebook.com/NewPaltzZines](https://www.facebook.com/NewPaltzZines)

or e-mail veitchm@newpaltz.edu

Figure 5. Flyer from zine-making workshop, November 2014. Image courtesy of the New Paltz Zine Library, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.

from the library collection and share some of the things they observed—ranging from the tone or content to physical observations about printing, size, and binding. During the hands-on portion of the evening, she covered the tables with old magazines, glue sticks, scissors, and sharpies, and demonstrated how to make a one-page mini folded zine, along with larger format layouts.

Zines produced that evening ranged from the personal to the surreal, and included titles like *How to Survive College Swimming*, *Rules I Live By*, *Birth of Chet*, and *The Guide to Escaping Successfully without a Trace*.

As everyone was packing up to leave at the end of the night, one student commented “it felt good to use my brain in a different way,” and another expressed how hard it was going to be to put her zine down and get back to writing a paper. While zine-making is certainly an avenue for political and creative self-expression, this feedback served as a reminder that creating zines can be a welcome opportunity for stress relief. As many academic libraries turn to leisure reading collections, and special events intended to meet this need, it was instructive to find that zines could play a role in stress reduction programming.



Figure 6. *Birth of Chet* (back cover) by Goat Girl, made at the November 2014 zine-making workshop held at SUNY New Paltz. Image courtesy of the New Paltz Zine Library, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.



Figure 7. Excerpts from *Self-Care Quilt*. By Take Back the Night and the New Paltz Zine Library, Edited by Zine Library Interns Jen Campos and Kelly Lindberg, Spring 2016. Image courtesy of the New Paltz Zine Library, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.

In spring 2016, we collaborated with the Take Back the Night programming committee (a student group) to bring zine-making to a self-care event they hosted on campus. Zine library interns Jen Campos and Kelly Lindberg organized a compilation zine project, inviting each participant to create a page about their own self-care strategies. The pages were assembled, copied, and distributed to contributing authors as the zine *Self Care Quilt*.

The interns also created their own anthologized zine with cited excerpts from our collection, *A Handy Guide for Hands-On Self Care*, which was distributed at the event.

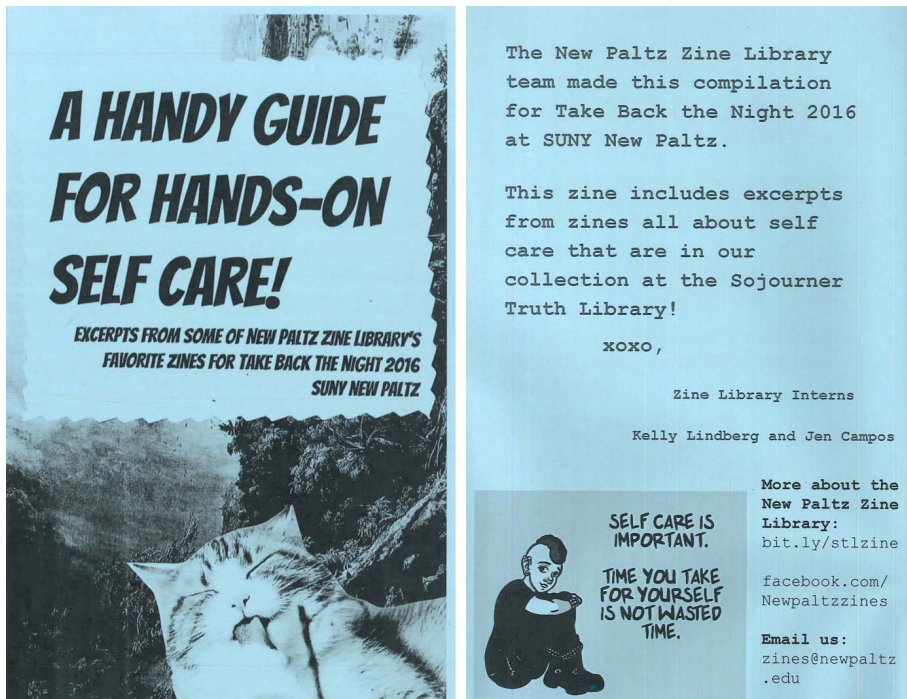


Figure 8. Cover and introduction from *A Handy Guide for Hands-On Self Care*. Edited by Zine Library Interns Jen Campos and Kelly Lindberg, Spring 2016. Image courtesy of the New Paltz Zine Library, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.

Zines in the Classroom

Social media and regular events have been essential steps toward integrating the zine library into the broader culture of campus—both academically, and in the broader realm of student experience. Through targeted outreach, we have gradually developed relationships with faculty who are interested in using zines in the classroom. Several instructors in the English Composition Program have assigned students to make a zine that builds on a theme from their formal writing assignments.

In spring 2015, I and current and former zine library interns gave a short presentation to a Thematic Drawing class, returning a month later to see zines produced in a related assignment, many of which were submitted for inclusion in the zine library. We have also been invited to give lectures on zine history and in-class workshops for courses in the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department. As Alana Kumbier and others have pointed out, zines can be a great resource for helping students understand that “authority is contextual,” (2014, p. 164) which aligns with the first frame in ACRL’s Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (ACRL, 2015). In future instruction sessions, we hope to better integrate zines into instruction activities related to this portion of the Framework.

Access and Digitization

As the collection grows and members of the campus community express new interest in these materials, we have received a number of questions related to accessing zines. Up until now, nearly all of the zines have been non-circulating, though a few commercially bound and anthologized zines circulate, but will transition to circulating in protective envelopes in the coming year. Circulating zines means compromising on preservation but this is very much in keeping with our mission to provide a low barrier of access to the collection.

In a world where so much art and writing is published online through Tumblr and other online blogging platforms, we have been asked about whether our zines could be put online for easier access. In fact, in spring 2015, students in a digital humanities class built an online collection through Omeka to house works from the zine library. Students were careful to obtain permission from zine authors and artists before posting scans of the work online.


While selected titles may be shared digitally at some point, the important truth remains that zines are first and foremost print entities, dispersed on a human scale since long before the Web provided other

Browse Items Browse Collections About Browse Exhibits

A digital compilation of zines featured in the Zine Library @ the SUNY New Paltz Sojourner Truth Library

Featured Item


ANARKITTY IN THE UK



Music and cats!

Featured Collection


POLITICAL ZINES



Featured Exhibit


PERSONAL

Personal zines



Recently Added Items

THE OCCUPY VOICE NO. 1



A collection of writing, images, and comics expressing the opinions of those who were and are a part of the Occupy Wall Street Movement.

options. In “Zines are not Blogs,” Freedman outlines several highly significant distinctions between these two media. She points out that blogs are often hosted by an entity beyond the author, one who maintains some level of control including the possibility of removing content. In contrast, zines are usually self-published, can more easily remain anonymous, and are unlikely to undergo content changes once printed (Freedman, 2005). Because zine content often assumes relative privacy afforded by a limited print run, wide-scale digitization is not something we plan to pursue at New Paltz, although we may seek author permission from local zinesters to digitize selected titles from the Hudson Valley. We will continue to acquire, catalog, and promote zines as a tangible print collection.

As we look to the future of the zine library, we plan to bring a more expansive definition of access to our work by circulating materials used to create zines. In fall 2016, we will pilot zine-making kits that students will be able to check out, including tools like exact-o knives, funky scissors, glue sticks, sharpies, stamps, and needles/floss for sewing bindings. We’ll also circulate several typewriters that have been generously donated by faculty to support zine-making on campus. We’re hoping that sharing materials will encourage more readers to become authors, adding to the 40 and counting zines from Hudson Valley authors that we currently hold in our collection. As always, we cannot wait to see the next submission.

Figure 9. Screen capture of the Omeka site, “New Paltz Zine Library Online,” by Jacquelyn Behan, Carly Rome, Lauren Alberti, and Caitlin O’Brien. Site created for Assistant Professor Annie Swafford’s Spring 2015 course, Digital Tools for the 21st Century.

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