Culture in Transit: Digitizing and Democratizing NYC’s Cultural Heritage

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@DigitizeNYC
http://www.mnyc.org/cit/
“How might we leverage libraries as a platform to build more knowledgeable communities?”
CULTURE IN TRANSIT

MBQE

Digitizing & Democratizing Metropolitan New York’s Cultural Heritage
Project Goals

- On-site digitization service
- Expose hidden collections/preserve local history
- Materials added to Online Digital Collections Portals
- On ramp to DPLA
- Mobile digitization model
- Funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- Partnership with Metropolitan New York Library Council, Queens Library and Brooklyn Public Library
- 18 month project beginning in Feb 2015
Mobile Digitization Equipment
- First 3 months - ramp up and planning
- Job postings/hire 3 Mobile Digitization Specialists
- Decided on mobile digitization equipment for kits
- Purchased, tested, replaced, refined
Mobile Digitization Equipment

Flatbed Scanner

Copy-Stand

Outreach
Flatbed Scanner: Epson V Series

- V600 and V800 models: Excellent quality & capability for negatives
- SilverFast software for color management & pre-scan functionality
- V800: Extended capability vs. additional weight
Copy-Stand

- Canon EOS Rebel T5 DSLR
- Inverted tripod
- Fluorescent & LED lighting
- Muslin backdrop
Outreach

Interactive Resources:

Historic photographs slideshow & comparison

Oral history listening station

Community mapping
Transporting Digitization Equipment

- We love our wheeled Pelican cases!
- Don’t underestimate overall weight
Cultural Heritage Institution
Scanning at METRO
New York City (+ Westchester)
Goals: METRO

- DPLA and ESDN
- Support needs of our smaller/underfunded members
- Pilot small-scale digitization service for members
- Collections to seed DCMNY
- Learn about our Member needs - digitization and related
Institutional Scanning - METRO
Choosing Partners

If you chose option two above, please briefly tell us more about these materials.

Please provide collection title and a brief description of the materials in the collection (subject matter/themes, as well as material types, e.g. photographs, postcards, pamphlets etc.).

Long answer text

What is the size of the collection?

Please provide approximate number of items you would like to see digitized. If the items are made up multiple pages (pamphlets etc.), please provide total page count, or average number of pages per item. This will provide a rough sense of how long it will take to digitize the collection. CIT aims to visit host institutions for a 1 to 2 week period and is looking for small to medium sized collections to digitize.

Long answer text

To what extent are the materials currently organized and described?

How are the materials currently organized (boxes, folders etc.)? What metadata exists for the materials (e.g., records, spreadsheet, finding aid, etc.)?

Long answer text

Have you digitized any material from your collections before?

Small-scale or grant-funded digitization projects (not digitization on demand services for patrons).

Yes

No
Choosing Partners

- Quality (cohesive, significant)
- Feasibility (material type, #s, condition)
- Collection status (processed, cataloged, rights?)
- Practicalities (location, physical space, security, contact person, timeline)
Choosing Partners

Site Visits:

- View / Assess Materials
- Go to Location/View Space
- Meet with staff
Facts & Figures

So far.....

- 10 METRO member institutions visited
- Over 1,600 items digitized
- Collections online - dcmny.org
- 8 collections in DPLA
- Others harvested - should be there soon!
LGBT Center: Unique & Historically Important
Hostos Community College: Celebration of Local Culture
Yeshiva University: Oversize & Inaccessible
Community Scanning at Brooklyn Public Library and Queens Library
Community Scanning
Community Scanning
Queens Library, Brooklyn Public Library
Community Scanning in Queens

- Woodside
- Sunnyside
- Ridgewood
- Woodhaven
- Richmond Hill
- Rochdale Village
- St Albans
- Lefferts
- Forest Hills
- Douglaston & Little Neck
- Flushing
Community Scanning in Brooklyn

- Greenpoint
- Williamsburg
- Clinton Hill
- Park Slope
- Flatbush
- Dyker Heights
- Bed-Stuy
- East New York
- Canarsie
- Sheepshead Bay
Boys and Girls High School
Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

Emanuel United Church of Christ
Woodhaven, Queens

Neir’s Tavern
Woodhaven, Queens

Green-Wood Cemetery
Brooklyn
How it Works - Event Planning

- Site Selection and Visit
- Scheduling
- Outreach planning
- Promo Materials
- Plan for Set up
How it Works - Day of Event

- Donors work one on one with staff
- Select materials to be digitized
- Prepare folder of materials for scanning
Working on Paper: Consent & Metadata
How it Works - Scanning

- Staff digitize items, save properly
- Load external HD with all donations
- Load thumbdrive for donor
Donors take away....

- The materials they shared
- Thumbdrive of scans
- Consent form
- Our contact information
- What is on your thumbdrive handout
- Personal digital archiving brochure
After the Event: Processing
Pond to Lake to Ocean
Community Partnerships

- Community groups as liaisons
- Targeted outreach
- Access to new communities
- Language support
- Credibility
- Focused documentation of traditionally under-represented communities
My Baryo, My Borough
Greater Ridgewood Youth Council
Brooklyn Connections
Community Partners Established

Asian Americans for Equality
Brooklyn Connections
Douglaston / Little Neck Historical Society
Five Boro Story Project
Forest Hills Asian Association
Good Neighbors of Park Slope
Greater Ridgewood Youth Council
My Baryo, My Borough
Woodhaven Cultural and Historical Society
Outcomes

- Diversify / democratize archives at BPL and QL
- Make materials available publicly online
- Add to historical record
- Provide opportunity for under-represented to share their stories
Sharing What We Learned
Conference Presentations

Local/Regional::
METROCon
Archivists Roundtable
NYC Digital Humanities
MARAC

National:
NCPH
DPLAFest
NSDR Symposium
Personal Digital Archiving
ALA
Welcome to Culture in Transit

Culture in Transit is a partnership between the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO), the Brooklyn Public Library and Queens Library to bring mobile scanning equipment to smaller libraries, archives, museums, and the communities they serve. We are one of 22 projects to win the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's Knight News Challenge on Libraries. Our work falls into two main areas:

- **Community Events** (Queens Library and Brooklyn Public Library): We bring our mobile digitization kit to library branches and invite residents to bring in family photos and memorabilia. We scan the materials, which are returned to the donors along with a flash drive of digital copies. The digital copies are also included in own digital catalogs, and shared with the Digital Public Library of America.
- **Institutional Scanning** (METRO): We bring our mobile digitization kit to METRO member institutions across New York City and Westchester. We scan selected...
Putting local history on the map: Institutional scanning at White Plains Public Library

Posted on October 20, 2015 by Caroline Catchpole

At the end of September, I spent two weeks onsite at White Plains Public Library, the latest METRO host institution for the project. They were an excellent candidate for the White Plains, New York, project, as they had already digitized material from their history collection, which, while mentioned on their website, are not currently cataloged and so not widely accessible to their patrons or wider audiences. They also do not currently have a platform to publish any digitized material online. The digitized collection up on METRO's Digital Culture site, will elevate this collection to many new audiences.

White Plains, the county seat of Westchester, has a rich and varied history, which is reflected in the collection of images I scanned whilst I was there. I was able to scan 246 unique images, with almost half of these images taken by John Rosch (1854-1932). The collection represents important local events to national and international events, from the 1948 Parade of Progress to soldiers marching through the streets of White Plains during World War One.

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So what's in a kit?

Posted on July 23, 2015 by Caroline Catchpole

This post focuses on our mobile digitization kits and what they include. Below, we have compiled a comprehensive list of all items that make up the kit. Not all equipment features in each kit due to the differences between community events and at institutions.

We see this list almost as a first draft of equipment for the project, with the goal of improving and refining the kit over time. The list includes all of the items we use and will help us understand what equipment is needed to digitize our collections.

The costs listed for these items represent the cost of each kit. We have consistently purchased three of most items (one for each, METRO). The costs listed for these items represent the cost of each kit. We have consistently purchased three of most items (one for each, METRO).

**Please note that we are including pricing information and links to vendors where possible.**

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Creative Commons Licenses: How They Work and Why We Use Them

Posted on January 26, 2016 by Sarah

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Launching soon...
CULTURE IN TRANSIT TOOLKIT
Digitizing and democratizing Metropolitan New York's Cultural Heritage.
Community

Introduction

Section One - Event Planning

Section Two - Outreach

Section Three - Event Overview

Section Four - Educational Resources

Section Five - Assessment

Section Six - Resources

Introduction

At community scanning events, we bring our mobile digitization kit to library branches and invite residents to bring in photos, documents and memorabilia. We scan the materials, which are returned to the donors with a flash drive of digital copies. The digital files are then included in the digital archives of our respective repositories, as well as ingested into the Digital Public Library of America. Our role in this process includes: selecting locations, scheduling events, doing outreach and collaborating with partners, facilitating the events, and doing the post-event cataloging and ingest of materials into our digital repositories.
Workflow Management

Workflow documentation and tracking tools to monitor progress are a good way to ensure all involved in a project are kept informed of progress and of their responsibilities.

We created a visual aid of the end-to-end CIT workflow at METRO to help us understand and communicate the steps involved in the project.

We used a checklist for every project partner we worked with to track every step of our work with them (detailed in the checklist are METRO centric tasks). It was kept in the team’s Google Drive folders, ensuring everyone had access to it.
Section Six - Resources

Below is a list of all resources developed and used for community scanning events. These resources are located throughout this section but this list provides a quick-glance locator for the resources.

- Event Planning Checklist for Community Scanning Events.
- Sample Letter to Public Library Branches for Community Scanning Events.
- Letter and Consent Form for School Scanning Program.
- Metadata Collection Sheet for School Scanning Program.
- Sample Community Scanning Staffing Plan.
- Community Scanning Event Workflow and Procedure.
- Community Scanning Digitization Workflow.
- Informed Consent Form for Community Scanning Events - Queens Library.
- Informed Consent Form for Community Scanning Events - Brooklyn Public Library.
- Metadata Collection Sheet for Community Scanning Events - Queens Library.
- Metadata Collection Sheet for Community Scanning Events - Brooklyn Public Library.
- Community Scanning Events Interactive Outreach Model.
Contact Us!

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