TDL Spotlight: The University of Houston Digital Library

The Suffrage Movement through the eyes of a Texas socialite. Yearbook photos of 1950s-era bobby soxers. Letters from a Revolutionary War officer. Historic hand-tinted photographs and tourist postcards collected over many decades. What do they have in common? They are all part of the rich collection of photos and other primary materials to be found in the University of Houston Digital Library.

Over the past year, the UH Libraries, a TDL member institution, has developed an exciting set of digital collections focused mainly, though not exclusively, on Houston and Texas history. The continually growing set of items includes roughly a dozen collections, including a set of historic Houston photos and one of images of the 1915 Galveston Hurricane.

Leading the development of the UH Digital Repository is Michele Reilly, Head of Digital Services, who came to the University of Houston in 2009. Reilly and her staff have built on the digitization efforts that preceded her to launch the collection of photographs, postcards, scanned scrapbook items and letters that together comprise the UH Digital Library.

From Suffragettes to Cougar Spirit
"Our ultimate mission," says Reilly, "is to provide our faculty and students with a really great resource for primary objects, so that they can further their

Continued on pg. 2

In This Issue:

- TDL Spotlight: University of Houston Digital Library
- TCDL 2010 program highlights digital library collaborations
- Development Update: PresNet development sprints underway

- Featured Resource: TDL Wiki
- Cray supercomputer at Texas Tech Libraries
- Upcoming training opportunities
- Texas ETD Association annual meeting scheduled for June 16

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TDL Spotlight: UH Digital Library (cont.)

own research."

To that end, Reilly and her team have added – and continue to add – collections of primary materials that have the potential to enrich scholarly understanding of life in Texas and in Houston, as well as historically important materials owned by the libraries that are outside those geographic parameters.

A particular favorite of Reilly's is the Ewing Family Papers, a collection of scrapbook materials from Mrs. Kittredge Ewing, a Houston socialite and suffragette of the early 1900s. The materials include newspaper clippings and other materials that detail Ewing's connections to the national Suffrage Movement and other activism on women's issues.

"To read through [the clippings], you get a real sense of what it was like in Houston at that time and what they were fighting for – better schools, no child labor," Reilly says. "It's a very, very interesting collection and one that, for instance, the women's studies college on campus uses in the classroom, because it has so much importance for their work."

The 1949 Houstonian is one in a collection of University of Houston yearbooks in the UH Digital Library.

Additionally, the Digital Library includes collections that are not Texas-centric. A collection of beautiful hand-tinted photos by Mexican photographer Luis Marquez, for instance, only has a tangential connection to Texas. Marquez gave the photos to Mrs. Joe Betsy Allred, wife of Governor James Allred, after she visited Mexico in 1937.

"Our ultimate mission is to provide our faculty and students with a great resource for primary objects, so that they can further their own research."

—Michele Reilly

Collection Development and Workflow

The UH Digital Library officially went live in September 2009, though a pilot collection was up and running a few months earlier. "We started with about 2,500 items that were already scanned before I arrived," says Reilly. "Then we wrote a collection development policy and a checklist for people to go through."

The development of that collection policy – and a detailed standardized workflow for the Digital Projects team – have been crucial to the Digital Library's success.

"Doing the backend stuff like policy development is truly one of the most important things," Reilly claims. "My staff and student workers know what's happening at any moment and they know where they can go to find it out."

Reilly credits her staff with making the creation of the UH Digital Library possible. "I'm so proud of my staff and the work they've done," Reilly said. "They have picked up this ball and run with it – they are creative and come up with terrific ideas. I really couldn't have a better group to work with."

For more information about the University of Houston Digital Library, visit the digital repository at http://digital.lib.uh.edu/. ◊

TCDL 2010 program highlights digital library collaborations

The 2010 Texas Conference on Digital Libraries is less than a month away! If you haven't already, register now for the conference, which takes place May 17-18 in Austin, at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center.

The TDL has planned a program packed with great speakers and exciting opportunities for sharing knowledge about digital library projects all over the state and beyond. The focus of the conference will be on **Collaboration** in the service of advancing scholarly communication.

Below are just a few highlights from the TCDL 2010 program. To see the full program for the conference, be sure to visit the TCDL 2010 website.

Invited Speakers

- *Leslie Carr* of the EPrints Repository Software Team at the University of Southampton will contemplate the future of online information technologies – and how we as communities are "inventing the Web" – in his opening keynote address "Directions for Digital Repositories."

- *Reagan Moore* from the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina will close the main conference with a discussion of preservation as part of policy-based data management in a talk entitled "Virtualization of the Data Life Cycle."

- Numerous TDL members and partners will discuss ongoing *digital library collaborations* that have exciting potential for the future of scholarly

communication in Texas.

- The TDL development team will provide updates on the *Vireo ETD system* and the TDL *Preservation Network*, two key development initiatives for 2009-10.

Reception and Poster Session

All registrants are encouraged to attend the reception and poster session to be held on Monday evening in the AT&T Center ballroom. The reception will provide opportunities for social interaction with colleagues and the chance to see and hear about what TDL members from across the state are working on in their digital projects teams. See the full list of poster presentations here.

Workshops and Forums

On Tuesday afternoon, TDL members will be holding special workshops and forums that all interested parties are invited to attend. These include forums held by the Texas ETD Association and the TDL Metadata Working Group, as well as a workshop on handling issues of acquisition, copyright, and accessibility with born-digital publications. Find out more about the TCDL Workshops and Forums here.

Vireo Users Group Meeting

On Wednesday, May 19 – the day following TCDL 2010 – the Vireo Users Group will hold a meeting for existing and potential users of the TDL electronic thesis and dissertation management system (Vireo). There is no cost to attend the Users Group meeting, but those planning to attend should contact the TDL at info@tdl.org.

The TDL is looking forward to sharing this conference experience with our members and friends from across Texas. For more information about TCDL 2010, please visit the conference website at http://conferences.tdl.org/TCDL/2010. ◊

Development Update: PresNet development sprints underway

The Texas Digital Library (TDL) provides digital resources for higher education faculty to make scholarship openly available. However, digital artifacts can be fragile, and the fast pace of change requires planning to ensure that files created now will be accessible years into the future.

Since its inception, the TDL has committed itself to providing the infrastructure necessary to address these preservation issues.

Following the release of Vireo 1.0.1 in March, the TDL team has turned its attention to advancing the development of its existing preservation infrastructure, (the Preservation Network). It began the first of three development sprints on PresNet on Monday, March 22 and will conclude the final sprint prior to the 2010 Texas Conference on Digital Libraries.

According to TDL chief technology officer Peter Nürnberg, the goal of the sprints is to come to TCDL 2010 with the ability to "package and move all our TDL-managed assets, including the federated ETD collection, Learning Object Repository assets, and all journals and blogs, from TDL servers to the Texas Advanced Computing Center."

Texas Advanced Computing Center

The Texas Advanced Computing Center (known as TACC) is a key piece in the TDL PresNet puzzle. Located at UT Austin, TACC provides advanced computing services to researchers. The TDL is renting 10 terabytes of storage space at TACC and, in the coming development sprints, will develop a process for packaging data hosted on TDL servers and delivering it to TACC, where it will be securely stored.

According to Nürnberg, the first phase of development "will serve as the basis for preservation efforts moving forward." The resulting PresNet will also serve some crucial preservation needs, such as securing multiple copies of member assets and peri-odically testing them for integrity.

iRODS

The software behind the TDL's preservation effort is an open-source application, developed primarily at the University of North Carolina, called iRODS (Integrated Rule-Oriented Data System).

iRODS is a "data-grid software system" that can automate some preservation-related tasks. It was developed by the Data Intensive Cyber Environments (DICE) Center at the UNC School of Information and Library Science and the Renaissance Computing Institute (RENCI) at UNC Chapel Hill and UC San Diego. (DICE director Reagan Moore, will deliver the closing keynote address at the 2010 Texas Conference on Digital Libraries.)

iRODS has an active user base that is deploying the software in similar ways to TDL. The existence of this community is a boon to the TDL: "The fact that iRODS has a user community that is doing work similar to what TDL is doing is extremely useful to us," Nürnberg said. "We can take advantage of that work, rather than develop it entirely on our own."

PresNet Users Group

The TDL PresNet User Group held its inaugural meeting in Austin on Tuesday, April 20. The group will provide stakeholders at TDL member universities the opportunity to guide development of preservation policy and provide feedback to the TDL development team.

Attendees at the inaugural meeting included Michele Reilly of the University of Houston, Wendy Martin of the University of Texas at Austin, Gail Clement of Texas A&M University, and Jason Thomale of Texas Tech University.
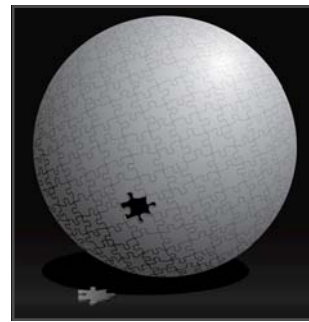
You can find out more information about PresNet on the TDL Wiki, which will be updated as development progresses. Additional questions can be directed to the TDL program coordinator at info@tdl.org. ◊

Featured Resource: The Texas Digital Library Wiki

- Ever forget how to create an email template in Vireo?
- Need to learn more about managing users in your TDL Electronic Journal?
- Looking for a place to share information about your institution's best practices?

The TDL Wiki is a great resource in all of these situations. It contains a growing library of articles providing information on TDL services and projects, including extensive user documentation for Vireo ETD management software and Open Journal Systems e-journal software. It also contains lists of resources, such as conferences, blogs, and digital library guides, as well as information about ongoing TDL development projects.

What's more, the TDL Wiki is a living, collaborative document, and any TDL member interested in becoming a contributor is welcome to edit and/or add content. Members or TDL user groups can create sections of the wiki to log progress on their projects. Others might add their best practices in the use of Vireo, blogs, or any other scholarly communication tool in order to help out other members.

So be sure to add the TDL Wiki to your toolkit, and refer to it often. If you're interested in contributing to the wiki, visit the Wiki main page (http://wikis.tdl.org/tdl) for instructions on getting started. Together, TDL members can make the Wiki an invaluable resource for everyone. ◊

Cray supercomputer aids teaching and research at Texas Tech Libraries

Cray "The Supercomputer Company" has published a case study on its website featuring the Texas Tech Libraries' implementation of Cray supercomputers and Mathworks' MATLAB software in the 3D Animation Lab.

The case study, co-written by Ken Chaffin, lab director, discusses how library users were seeking a way to speed rendering in 3D movie projects, thus the implementation of the Cray CX1 supercomputer. In June 2009, a rendering farm was created for the library by installing the Cray system along with Microsoft HPC Server 2008 and Pixar RenderMan®.

Many on campus also use MathWorks MATLAB, an industry-standard technical computing language. So in September 2009, the library installed MATLAB on the Cray supercomputer, thereby enabling scientific visualization. The Cray system allows users to process MATLAB applications up to 96 times faster.

The Cray CX1 system contributes to the library's mission to enable radically new endeavors in teaching, learning, research, creativity and collaboration, said Donald Dyal, Ph.D., dean of Texas Tech Libraries. The library is committed to making the resource openly available to students, faculty and staff.

Dyal explains why open access is so important. "To live and work in this new world, we need computing tools that can take people places they haven't been before. Clearly, 3D technologies are essential to helping knowledge searchers better explore the world around them and build upon existing knowledge." ◊

Upcoming training opportunities for TDL members

The Texas Digital Library will offer the following course in May:

May 27, 2010 - DSpace Systems
An advanced-level course for system administrators responsible for maintaining DSpace installations. The course covers topics such as backup and restoration, data protection, user authentication, and batch import procedures.

The course is a full-day session (9 AM to 4 PM) and will take place in the Dutton Avenue Office & Parking Facility on the Baylor University campus. Registration for the course is $50.

For more information about TDL training offerings, please visit the TDL website. ◊

Texas ETD Association annual meeting scheduled for June 16

The Texas Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Association, an organization that supports the use and management of ETDs in Texas, will hold its annual meeting on June 16 from 9 AM to 12 PM in Austin, Texas.

The meeting will be held as a pre-conference workshop in conjunction with the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations' ETD 2010 conference. Conference attendees may attend the meeting at no cost; however, those attending the Texas ETD Association meeting without registering for the conference will be required to pay a $25 fee.

The annual meeting will feature leading figures in the ETD field who will offer practical advice on ETD issues. To learn more and register for the meeting, please visit the ETD 2010 site. ◊

About the TDL

The Texas Digital Library is a multi-university consortium providing the digital infrastructure to support a fully online scholarly community for institutions of higher education in Texas and to promote the widespread availability of their enormous intellectual capital.

Services provided by the TDL to its members include:

♦ Institutional repositories
♦ Electronic Journals
♦ ETD Submission and Management software
♦ Scholarly Blogs
♦ Research Wikis
♦ Faculty homepages
♦ Online conference management

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The University of Texas at Arlington
The University of Texas at Austin*
The University of Texas at Brownsville
The University of Texas at Dallas
The University of Texas Southwestern Medical   Center at Dallas
The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

* founding institution