Do more with Less: Getting Started in Digital Asset Management (DAM)

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Outline

- Some background information
- The importance of a Digital Asset Management System
- Challenges to getting started
  - Where do I start?
  - Staff resources
  - Money
  - Institutional support and buy-in
  - Metadata
- Benefits
PALS – a program of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; providing library technology services since 1978

- Experienced knowledgeable staff: systems, programming, training, support

- Host and support Islandora, an open source Digital Asset Management System
Southwest Minnesota State University

Wanted to start preserving college history

- Alumni magazine
- Student newspapers
- Photographs
- Founding documents from MDL

http://archives.smsu.edu
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Started with planning, laid digital foundation and developed best practices with help of MDL

- Vikings Stories videos
- Yearbooks
- Athletics
- Student Newspapers

http://arch.lib.mnsu.edu
The College of St. Scholastica

Wanted to make documents and photographs accessible to college community and consolidate multiple databases into one:

- Photographs
- Student Newspapers
- Yearbooks
- College Catalogs

http://quarry.css.edu
Original goal: digitize accreditation documents for Higher Learning Commission; library staff was uniquely qualified to fulfill this role for the college

- Documents: college governance, campus facilities plan, marketing, accreditation
- College life photographs
- College Catalogs
- Videos

http://archives.sctcc.edu
Digital preservation and asset storage were their most important reasons to start using a DAM.

- City newspaper
- Photographs of artwork on campus
- Yearbooks
- Photographs
- Student Newspaper
Why is all this DAM work important?

- increase student access
- take leadership role
- prove value
- improve workflows
- digital assets
- protect data
- save money
- raise awareness
- manage databases
- preserve unique material
CORE PURPOSES OF DAM

Many reasons DAM is important, but for Libraries/Archives there are two core purposes to pursue DAM.

1. PRESERVE, MANAGE, AND SHARE DIGITAL ASSETS

2. PUT LIBRARY/ARCHIVES IN LEADERSHIP ROLE
Why is DAM important?

- Want to make material accessible to college community
- Consolidate multiple databases into one
- Important part of fostering community and growing mission
01 Data loss
02 Increasing amount of critical, historical documents
03 Multiple storage locations
04 Had no plan for keeping or accessing documents
05 Library staff uniquely qualified to lead project
Reasons

- Library Services' goal is to increase access to locally created digital materials.
- Ensures long-term access to cultural record of institution and region.
- Support requests for University Archives materials from many groups.
- ARCH repository is important component of digital preservation plan.
Challenges: What prohibits people from getting started?

- Where do I start?
- Staff resources
- Money
- Institutional support and buy-in
- Metadata
Challenge #1: Where do I start?

What do libraries say?
College of St. Scholastica: prioritize the collections

1. The photographs and publications we had in Minnesota Reflections: *already digitized and in a high quality format*

2. The college's publications we had in another database: *already scanned, most heavily used* by researchers, *allow us to discontinue paying for the other database thus saving money*.  

3. Mass upload (17,000) of more recent photographs that were in the Marketing Dept.'s D.A.M.: born digital and do not require scanning.
Southwest Minnesota State University: Get institutional support

- Very intentional when selected first project
- Alumni magazine touches many aspects of the University
- Began to build relationship with the Alumni Office
- Target was foundation and alumni
Minnesota State University, Mankato: Take time to plan

- Started with planning, what do we need to do first?
- Staff started getting training
- Do one format at a time since each has its own challenges
Getting started - practical tips

- Define repository goals, vision
- Plan: priorities, anticipate issues, roles
- Select first project – top priority, high-impact, one format, start small
- Choose metadata standard and which fields to include
Select software

- secure storage to ensure preservation
- user friendly and efficient search and retrieval
- control of who has access; can perform which functions
- derivatives and preservation are automatic
- can transfer to and from MDL
Get support

- help with planning the repository
- metadata recommendations and assistance with mapping
- forms to make data entry easy
- training on the use of the software
- support to enable you to make the most effective use of the software
- active and responsive community
In short:

- Try something, jump in
- Start small
- Just get started - take the risk
Challenge #2: Staff Resources

- Who is going to do the DAM work?
- Where do we find the time?
- Staffing challenges are a recurring theme.
St. Cloud Community and Technical College

What enabled us to move forward was recruiting others to support our project. We ... needed help ... because of our small staff so we recruited people to assist us.

Current partners:
  - Marketing and Communications department
  - IT department (web developers)
  - Library staff

Future partners:
  - Foundation staff
  - Student Affairs
  - Athletics
  - Deans and Vice Presidents
College of St. Scholastica

- We would also like to train more members of our community outside of the Library to input their own photographs and documents thus making it more sustainable and essential.
Winona State University

- No dedicated staff for significant portion of time; individual librarians worked on “their” project which was connected to their role
- Now 1 person coordinating plus 2 staff and 2 students, new hire will be in archives
- Coordinated approach to digital projects
- Outsource digitization: do some at a time based on funding available; MDL does scanning for you if you are adding a collection to Minnesota Reflections
- PALS staff provides expertise
Minnesota State University, Mankato

- University archivist
- Dean’s support
- Staff open position revised to create new archives position
- Outsource digitization (don’t have equipment, apply for Minnesota Cultural Heritage funds to pay for digitization, digitize microfilm, learn from vendors’ questions and suggestions)
- Never enough staff
- Student workers
Southwest Minnesota State University

- With support, it is doable
- If valuable, find the time
Challenge #3: Funding

- How are our partners paying for digital asset management?
FUNDING STRATEGY

SPECIAL FUNDING GRANTS

- Applied for special funding grants through the University Foundation.

- Successfully received funding for the past two years, and the next three years.
FUNDING STRATEGY

TECHNOLOGY FEE

- Paid for repository out of library budget with some additional funding from Technology fees. Now ongoing cost is built into annual library budget.
FUNDING STRATEGY
TECHNOLOGY FEE AND ACQUISITIONS BUDGET

- Has had consistent funding from Administration through Technology Fee, and librarians decided to dedicate portion of acquisitions budget of several years to fund core project of digitizing Winona City newspapers.
FUNDING STRATEGY

GRANTS

- Received Cultural Heritage Fund grants to support digitization of newspapers.

- Support of Library Dean invaluable in terms of funding authorization for purchases such as necessary equipment.
Challenge #4: Gaining institutional support

- Who can help provide the support needed?
- How can I show this is important? Where do I start?
- What can I use to build support? What collections/items would work well for this?
Gaining institutional support and buy-in: Have something to share

Create a beta digital collection to illustrate concept

“Having something in the Digital Archives to be able to demonstrate/show to our Alumni Director and our Foundation Board really helped sell the concept. Then we could start justifying how useful it could be to the university.”
Gaining institutional support and buy-in: Choose a small, high-impact, first collection
Gaining support and institutional buy-in: Key support person

- Very important to seek out a key person early on
- Initial key to success was early, full buy-in and support from Library Dean
Gaining institutional support and buy-in: Partnerships

- Build partnerships with other Departments
- Marketing, Athletics, Theater, Alumni
- What other Departments might work?
- What collections might appeal to them?
Gaining support and institutional buy-in:

Connect with campus mission

“Allowing access to the history of the institution is an important part of fostering community and growing the mission.”

– Heidi Johnson and Kevin McGrew
Key strategies to gaining institutional support/buy-in

Start with a small, high-impact collection that could resonate across campus. Possible options include yearbooks, newsletters, photographs, accreditation documents, videos.

Seek out key individuals that can provide you with support and help build buy-in.

Build partnerships across campus. What collections/items might appeal to potential partners?
Challenge #5: Metadata

- How could your metadata decisions impact searching? Display?
- Which metadata standard can enhance/improve the user experience?
- How do you balance user needs vs your needs?
- Who will be entering the metadata?
Forms can use any metadata standard
Import/Export to Minnesota Digital Library
Can create ingest forms for any format

METADATA
Islandora uses custom ingest forms for metadata description

Take advantage of controlled vocabulary, default text
Technical and preservation metadata automatically generated
# Approaches to Metadata

## Southwest Minnesota State University

**Minimalist: 17 metadata fields**

- Main goal was to get objects online for users
- Formats (newspapers, newsletters) do not require extensive metadata
- Relying on full text search capability

## Minnesota State University Mankato

**Detailed: 38 metadata fields**

- Wanted to follow MDL guidelines so they could export objects to MDL
- MSU-Mankato takes advantage of "simple workflow": One simpler ingest form for student workers, one more complex ingest form for staff
- This is so students can strictly and easily follow MDL guidelines
Our sites use MODS metadata on ingest forms.

- Could use any standard (not just MODS).
- We have chosen MODS so far because it is relatively easy to understand and use, designed for digital resources, and can be used with many different formats and types of material.
- Easy to convert to MDL.
Metadata: A few lessons

- Certain formats don’t need a lot of metadata (newspapers, publications) due to full text searching
- Other formats (photographs, videos) do need more metadata
- How much metadata do you want to use?
- What’s more important: Making the objects available for searching vs detailed metadata?
Metadata: A few more lessons

- It will never be perfect...
- ...but try to be consistent...
- MDL standards great learning tool / place to start
- MODS metadata website great resource
- No decision in regards to metadata has to be final
- Expect the unexpected
- Be flexible about encountering the unexpected
Is all this DAM work worth it?

What do libraries say?
It’s totally worth it and 50 years from now people are going to be glad we took the time to preserve our digital assets.
Southwest Minnesota State University

- Yes, it is worth it!
- It is a great way to connect with Alumni
- Search capabilities make it so effective for university historical research
- The most valuable aspect for me has been finding ways to connect with others across campus
- It’s been a great way for the library to take the lead on the university’s digital initiatives
- Will be very valuable for the 50th anniversary celebration
“Allowing access to the history of the institution is an important part of fostering community and growing the mission.” “Having all the metadata as well as the text of the documents be full-text searchable is the best feature of all.”
Winona State University

Benefits:
- Preservation of master in Islandora
- One integrated search site
- Confidence to grow digital asset management initiative
- Create campus wide strategies re: digital assets
- Can do MDL <-> DAM
Minnesota State University, Mankato

- New campus partnerships
- Athletics is “ecstatic” – need remote access to content
- Can bookmark and send content to Integrated Marketing
- More capacity and improved workflow
- Social media sharing
- Being part of a community, sharing ideas
- Very beneficial in preparing for 150th anniversary celebration
Is all this DAM work worth it?

- Library Leadership
- Community building
- Campus wide strategy
- Partnerships
- Preservation
- Full-text search
- Mobile design
- Integrated search
- Remote access
- Grow Mission
- YES!!!
Conclusion: Embrace the DAM work

- Gain access to and help build a strong community
- Show value and expertise through DAM initiatives
- Ownership / own your data / should be yours
- Step up to the plate and embrace the DAM work to put libraries/archives in critical leadership role for now and the future
- Through DAM, we can ensure the past and future are preserved, understood, and accessible to all free of bias
- Let’s make sure that we are the ones doing this
Embrace the DAM work
Your DAM Coffee Hour

- Join us online **June 15th at 2 PM** for a chance to ask us any questions you have regarding Islandora and digital asset management.

- For details on joining the session, go to [https://damstories.wordpress.com/](https://damstories.wordpress.com/) or [www.mnpals.org](http://www.mnpals.org) the week of June 15th.