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IS 423: Public Libraries Final Project

Memo: Santa Monica Public Library Main Branch DIY Archive Space

What it is:

The idea is to bring history to the people of Santa Monica through a participatory DIY space that allows the patrons of the Santa Monica Public Library Main Branch to digitize audio/visual materials such as photographs, film, and audio cassettes amongst others, as well as record and preserve oral histories. This will be modeled after the LAPL's DIY Memory Lab Station and therefore would be placed within a separate room in the library. Before a space can be fully dedicated to this archiving lab the suggestion would be to set up a temporary location to test it out either in the Main Library Community Meeting Room or the Multipurpose Room if more space is necessary.

Need for Santa Monica Public Library Main Branch:

The Santa Monica Public Library is one that has expressed an interest in the history of the city through things like the Santa Monica Collection Room, which contains a specialized selection of primary and secondary sources that chronicle the history of the Santa Monica Bay region, Southern California and the rest of the state. The Santa Monica History Museum is also located at the library. The focus on local history is a major part of this institution so the need for a project like this is to include the patrons in the collection of this history. Those who live in Santa Monica have materials to show and stories to tell and this DIY archiving space will allow them to not only bring these histories to a centralized location, but provide a space to digitally save what they have before it is unsalvageable.

What can further prove the need for a space like this can be found by looking at previous programs held at the library such as the One Story Project which was an oral history teen service that was run a few years ago. Externally speaking, one can look at the success of LAPL's DIY memory space, LAPL's Shades of LA program, or national oral history projects like StoryCorps to determine that people would like a space to accomplish this type of digital documentation.

Statistics and External Justifications:

StoryCorps oral history project has recorded more than 60,000 interviews among more than 100,000 participants over a period of 16 years, totaling 35,502,806 views on 221 uploads to their Youtube account along with an unspecified amount of views on their podcast.

Companies that offer scanning and digitization services such as Scan Digital and Scan Café are in high demand, the latter had 25,000,000 scans only after three years of being in business (as of 2009).

The popularity of Home Movie Day (globally running since 2005) showcases a vested interest in saving historical material.

Equipment Requirements:

The requirements of this space are to provide an area to record, scan, and digitize the individualized history of Santa Monica. Therefore, the technological requirements are based around the need for scanners that work with various audio/visual formats. Audio recording equipment such as microphones and photo/film/video scanners would be necessary along with those trained to use them. The correct software to utilize this equipment will also be necessary.

Depending on the space, sound proofing material for audio recording is a possible additional requirement.

Digital storage will need to be improved for the influx of new material.

Program Requirements:

- Provide step-by-step instructions for DIY archiving space including bi-monthly workshops on personal archiving/digital preservation.
- Build an online portal for the space to allow access to digitized materials for patrons as well as including instructional material/reservation options.
- Train librarians and staff at SMPL Main Branch on how to teach the above-mentioned workshops/how to run the equipment.

System:

- Patrons can use an online system (to be rolled out in the creation of this space) and reserve 1 to 2 hour sessions to digitize their obsolete/nearly obsolete formats.
- Patrons can book 30 minute to 1 hour sessions within a separate oral history booth/space where audio devices will be set up to record voices. Voiceovers will then be placed into the digital collection at SMPL to be accessed online. Voiceovers can be connected to other materials being digitized to provide oral context or can be individual stories, separate from other materials. Patrons are responsible for creating their own titles and tags for recordings so that they can be placed into an easy to find digital space and for quicker metadata creation.

Staffing:

- The archiving space when workshops are not being held should have at least one trained professional to help with troubleshooting/basic instruction to those who are using the space.
- For the digitized material, both audio and visual, a trained individual would have to help write the descriptions so that the material can be placed into the right location in the online portal.

Partnerships:

- As this project is based on archiving and the collection/digitization of materials the SMPL Main Branch should look at partners who promote archiving practices in Southern California. The Society of American Archivists or the Society of California Archivists would be relevant partnerships to this concept.
- In addition, because of the audio aspect with the oral history portion of this space, the Association for Recorded Sound Collections would be another Southern California chapter to look at.

Potential Outcomes:

- A database of audio/visual materials and oral stories that can be accessed through the library's website and can broaden the understanding of Santa Monica's history.
- Potentially bringing in an entirely new population to the library who haven't had access to self-archiving workshops in the city of Santa Monica.

Limitations:

- Because of the size/weight of digitizing equipment the prospect of mobility between branches is unlikely beyond the oral history audio recording devices, which can be circulated upon request.
- Due to the sheer number of materials patrons will be digitizing within this space, the ingestion of said materials into the SMPL digital collections may prove difficult with regards to correctly storing them.
- Possible issues of copyright/what the library is allowed to publish from its patrons would require some type of release form.

Costs:

- The cost of the equipment will be gathered through a grant likely through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). In addition, equipment can be donated by the community to the library.