living in Los Angeles a collection made on CONTENTdm

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The living in Los Angeles digital library built on CONTENTdm can be accessed at http://cdm16986.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16986coll57

This assignment asked the class to work in groups to create a digital library using CONTENTdm. The library my group created—living in Los Angeles, a collection of items representing our experience of the city—must be accessed by following the link above. Contents of the library have been downloaded to retain format and made available at the end of this report.

The report that follows describes our method and observations on using CONTENTdm as a platform for presenting this collection. As a group project, the report is the result of collaborative writing and represents the voices of all group members.

About this collection: objects, ephemera, guidebooks, fiction, and periodicals...

items culled from the collections of some residents—one born Angeleno, two east-side dwellers, and one whose relationship with the city is still in discovery—show their relationship to the sprawling city of Los Angeles.

living in Los Angeles

Explanations & Justifications of....

Decisions made when choosing items

Our collection, as we intend it, reflects a small slice of what it's like to live in Los Angeles. Small, necessarily—to think more broadly and attempt to capture what it's like to live in Los Angeles in general is of course impossible. Operating from our own unique perspectives, we have thus pulled the chosen objects from our private lives. We purposefully tried to assemble a varied collection of objects: records and documents that have emerged from transactions, that we've bought or simply come across, and intentionally or unintentionally held onto somewhere in the spaces we keep. We don't intend to center ourselves in this project, however; rather our aim was to create a collection that begins to describe and define the relationship between a person and where that person lives: how they interact with it, how they move within it. What do we collect that ties us to the place in which we live? Our frame for this line of query is Los Angeles.

Making edits to metadata schema & applying vocabulary control

Before adding any items to our collection through ContentDM, we first took time to discuss which fields were most necessary in describing our objects and if there existed suitable vocabularies for each field. We did choose to use the coverage field to describe the larger (spatial) context of our items; in this case, all objects were given the coverage of "Los Angeles (inhabited place)" as is used in the Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names.

We also found that ContentDM doesn't "know" all of the vocabularies that we wanted to incorporate. In the "Date" field and the "Language" field, then, we did not set vocabulary controls, but we did employ standards/standard forms from W3CDTF profile of ISO 8601 and IETF RFC 5646, respectively. In addition, we elected to add extra fields in the process of editing our collection. For instance, A People's Guide to Los Angeles has three authors, all of whom appear to have played equal roles in the creation of the text. "Contributor" did not seem to be an apt title for any. Since only one name can appear in the "Creator" field, we chose to solve the problem by adding "Creator - second" and "Creator - third." We deliberated about the type of a couple of objects as well—the movie ticket stub and the vintage postcard. Ultimately we chose "Text" and "Image" over "Interactive Resource" for these two items. Although an argument can be made for these items needing user

interaction in order to be understood, executed, or experienced, these two in particular are items out of use. The ticket stubs are stubs, after all; the postcard has already been sent and received and is now purely an aesthetic object.

Vocabulary Control Utilized

- Title: no controlled vocabulary used
 - Title taken from the item itself, if applicable, or assigned based on use and context
- Subject: AAT (Art & Architecture Thesaurus)
- Coverage: TGN (Thesaurus of Geographic Names)
 - Specific location "Los Angeles (inhabited place)" selected for all items to situate both the site and context of our collection
- Description: no controlled vocabulary used
 - A brief narrative description of each item was composed by its user/owner to situate the item within the collection's context
- Creator: ULAN (Union List of Artist Names)
 - Although the majority of the creators of objects included in our collection are not listed in ULAN, we chose to use this controlled vocabulary and add terms to our index as a measure of standardization. While our collection is small in scope for the purposes of this exercise, utilizing ULAN as a vocabulary in this field could easily accommodate a wider scope of objects if the collection were to be expanded.
- Creator second: ULAN
 - Field added and used where applicable
- Creator third: ULAN
 - Field added and used where applicable
- Creator fourth: ULAN
 - Field added and used where applicable
- Publisher: no controlled vocabulary used; publisher listed where applicable
- Contributors: no controlled vocabulary used
 - Individual contributors separated by semicolon for uniformity
- Date: W3CDTF profile of ISO 8601
 - Selected for specificity and uniformity
- Type: DCMI (Dublin Core Metadata Standard)
 - Few basic types available through this vocabulary allowed us to group items broadly
- Format: AAT
 - Using the wide scope of AAT vocabulary, we selected a specific format as a descriptive layer to the general type for each item

- Source: no controlled vocabulary used; source collection listed for each object
- Language: IETF RFC 5646
- Relation: no controlled vocabulary used
 - o Retained in the metadata though not utilized. Field could be of use to describe connections among items in a collection of larger scope.
- Audience: no controlled vocabulary used
 - Retained in the metadata though not utilized. Field could be of use if collection were to expand to include a broader range of source materials.
- **Events: AAT**
 - Specific types of activities pertaining to individual items contribute an additional contextual layer closely linked to use value of each piece in the collection
- Permissions: no controlled vocabulary used
 - Retained in the metadata though not utilized. An effort to specify permissions could be made if the collection were to be circulated or distributed.

Conclusion

Creating a collection using the CONTENTdm site had its challenges but none that couldn't be solved with patience and collaborative thinking. The first hurdle was simply to familiarize ourselves with CONTENTdm—its language and its guirks. The server, unfortunately constantly lagged while uploading items to be approved, which made the process of approval and indexing somewhat daunting. (We discovered, for example, that CONTENT dm doesn't think .jpeg and .jpg files are the same thing and will not use a .jpeg file. It instead defaults to a stock place-holder.) Despite the limitations we've described, we were able to add metadata easily and effectively define each item within the fields chosen by the site and required to make meaning within the collection.















































