

EVALUATION OF STUDENT ORGANIZATION ARCHIVES FOR DIGITIZATION

A WHITE PAPER FOR THE W0EEE AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS ORGANIZATION

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Abstract: This paper outlines the evaluation of documents provided by a student organization for digitization and ingestion by an open-access university institutional repository. Recommendations for the handling of materials and future project derivatives are included.

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Summary

The Amateur Radio Operators' student organization at the Missouri University of Science & Technology, WOEEE, requested digitization services for club archives from the University's Institutional Repository. Club leadership members produced paper materials to be evaluated for condition and suitability for an online digital collection. The IR evaluated materials based on condition and suitability for an online digital collection and made recommendations.

Introduction

Leadership members of the Amateur Radio Operators' student organization at the Missouri University of Science & Technology, WOEEE, requested digitization services for club archives from the University's Institutional Repository (IR). WOEEE provided sample materials for the IR to evaluate and develop a proposal for digitization and file structure. Materials included:

- Membership details and photographs
- Minutes from club meetings
- Operator and repair manuals for club technology and equipment
- Treasurer reports and bank financial statements

- Logbooks of amateur radio contacts made on club equipment

Methods, Assumptions, and Procedures:

The IR's stated mission is to provide digital access to the scholarly and cultural resources created by the university community, as well as campus cultural and historical works. IR staff concluded that the project of digitizing the WOOEE historical documents fell within the scope of this mission and agreed to proceed with evaluation and recommendations.

Materials arrived sorted by type within file folders and appeared to be in excellent physical condition. Handwritten materials were generally clear and easily legible on lined paper. Approximately 90% of the collection was in un-bound form or secured with easily removable fasteners (staples, paperclips, etc.), allowing for rapid processing through sheet fed scanners. Recorded station logs were written in a spiral-bound notebook with pre-printed log sheets, necessitating flatbed scanning for these materials to preserve original binding. Photographs are to be scanned in color format and club members will be tasked with identifying pictured members.

Club minutes ranged from handwritten notes to typed documents from meetings spanning over 50 years. Typed documents will be processed using ABBYY FineReader for Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to allow for full-text searching. Handwritten minutes will also be processed, though limited results are expected.

IR staff members were able to locate officially digitized manuals for most club equipment, negating the need to scan many of the physical documents from those files. Remaining manuals are under copyright protection of the equipment's original manufacturers. The IR deemed these manuals outside of the scope of IR's mission and recommended against their inclusion in the online collection.

The IR is an Open Access repository and it was assumed early on that sensitive club financial data should not be shared in this format. Official records of equipment purchases noted in club minutes are to be included, but bank statements may be digitized only as a courtesy to the club and not added to

the online collection. Any account numbers or personally identifiable financial data are to be redacted prior to ingestion by the Institutional Repository.

Results and Discussion:

Scans will be made of club meeting minutes, photographs, treasurer reports and station logs, according to National Archives Standards for preservation. These files will be scanned at 600 dpi and saved in *.tif (Tagged Image File Format) format to serve as preservation masters and will be stored in the IR's dark archive and backup systems.

Files will be compressed and converted to *.pdf (Portable Document Format) format to serve as distributed copies and ingested into the IR. These files will be processed through ABBY FineReader for Optical Character Recognition (OCR) prior to ingestion to allow for full-text searching wherever possible. Where OCR processing is not practical, in the case of handwritten or deteriorating print, full-text searching will not be made available at this time. Loose and un-mounted photographs will also be converted to *.jpg format for use in a photo gallery within the IR and as distributed copies for WOEEE.

Due to privacy concerns, the IR has decided against digitizing bank statements for the organization and instead offers to provide assistance in locating appropriate equipment for the club to handle this portion of the project internally. Equipment manuals will be handled in the same way for copyright reasons. These digital files may be considered useful for club operations, but fall outside of the scope of the IR's mission.

Physical materials will be returned to WOEEE along with digital copies of all *.pdf and *.jpg files. Access to uncompressed *.tif files will be granted to club officials on an as-needed basis.

Conclusions:

The IR had not previously been used to house a student organization's records, but it was determined that this use fell within the stated mission of the IR to provide access to campus cultural and historical works. Internal discussions among the IR staff found a need for a new file structure within the

IR to separate this and any other future student organization's documents from scholarly works. The file structure will be based on the previously designed file structure from the Faculty Senate and include separate sections for membership information, meeting minutes, and station logs.

Digitization of meeting notes, membership data, and photographs follow standard procedures as compared to conference proceedings and other photographic archives. However, digitization of amateur radio logs over the recorded time span prompted new opportunities for special treatment of data. These logs include signal reports and sometimes physical locations of other stations contacted on club equipment, which could be extrapolated into map data points for a visual display. IR staff limitations do not allow for this expansion of the project at this time, but it is our hope that this may be further investigated in the future by staff or club member volunteers.

Recommendations:

Document types not selected for scanning should be immediately returned to W0EEE. Remaining documents should be organized by date and type and then scanned and processed. Where OCR fails, W0EEE members may elect to manually transcribe documents and this data should be added to files as supplementary documents to allow for complete full-text searching within the digital collection. W0EEE is also encouraged to pursue a map project using station log data. Any resulting derivatives of that project should also be evaluated for inclusion in the IR collection.

Further, in the interest of consistency, the IR should develop a detailed policy regarding what types of documents are acceptable for IR ingestion from organizations and under what circumstances.

References

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