Digital Collection Assessment and Use

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Title
Assessing and Using Digital Collections

Session Specifics
Three hour workshop with two ten minute breaks

Instructional Partners
Discipline-specific teaching faculty

Audience
Mid-track undergraduates majoring in fields requiring a high-level of visual literacy about the cultural or physical world (anthropology, art, history, biology, geology, pre-medicine, etc.); graduate students; MLIS students learning about metadata development.

(Curricular) Context
This course was designed using a crosswalking method shared by Marcia Lei Zeng (Post-It note paper to tag, label, and simulate the crosswalking experience) and expanded upon in Metadata workshops held by the author.

The course supports the identification of metadata by individuals with local knowledge or subject-specific knowledge.

Learning Outcomes
The primary goal of this lesson is to familiarize students with the methods of metadata development and reuse, and to instill the confidence in their ability to contribute to curated knowledge. This is accomplished by following the following four steps:

1. Introduction to the effort required to create simple and robust metadata;
2. Use of the DPLA API to harvest metadata;
3. Practice of empathy in the assessment and use of digital collections, identify bias and how bias may be addressed, and identify gaps in access;
4. Enhancement of metadata for use by a specific user group, specifically through the identification of keywords, enhanced description, coverage, or additional fields.
Preparation

Audience --
Prior to workshop, students will need to identify a digital collection on the DPLA (https://dp.la/), which includes items affiliated with their area of special interest. Students should read “Queering the Catalog,” [https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/669547#.W7JUM6XaoSQ.link] before workshop.

Instructor --
Prepare printed images from the DPLA (https://dp.la/).
1. Images for students to discuss -- instructor can select any image shared with the DPLA, note that these image will be discussed in section 1.0 and cognitive biases will be assessed. Instructor should select images which could challenge student's identification of the content.
2. Maps to illustrate standards development (e.g.,
   a. hand drawn Florida map (few standards) (http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ncmaps/id/1097);
   b. engineer drawn (some standards) https://catalog.archives.gov/id/103396667;

API practice Note: it is very important for the instructor to gain some experience working with the API prior to teaching the course, the DPLA documentation is excellent (https://pro.dp.la/developers/api-codex).
Sample datasets (backup).
Prepared bookmarks/open tabs/software Full List.

Materials

Computer with World Wide Web access, document software (Microsoft, Google, etc.), paper, pencils, Post-Its of various colors, DPLA API key (https://pro.dp.la/developers/policies#get-a-key), and supplement (https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FUTJWNRNysj6hnzLe3W3kHccSfUmT8uqzbcwyMDOnr4Q)

Session Instructions/Steps

1.0 Developing Metadata
Introduction to the effort required to create simple and robust metadata

- Students --
  - Organize into small groups, each group selects a single image to discuss.
- Instructor --
  - Introduce the Panofsky-Shatford matrix (generics, specifics, abstracts)
  - Discuss cognitive biases and the effect on the transfer of information
2.0 Harvesting Metadata

Use DPLA API to harvest metadata

- **Instructor** --
  - Briefly **introduce** the idea of exposing metadata for use and reuse.

- **Students** --
  - **Discuss** possible ethical and legal issues to consider when using metadata created by others.

- **Instructor** --
  - **Demonstrate** harvest and creating calls

- **Students** --
  - **Construct** queries and **harvest** metadata [DPLA API Instructions](#)
  - **Collect** affiliated images from JSON results with an image scraper (e.g., Tab Save extension [github.com/lmmx/tabsave](#))

- **Students** --
  - Use a **concept mapping** approach to describe the systems (machines, protocols, and people) used to harvest metadata

3.0 Assessing Metadata

Practice empathy in the assessment and use of digital collections, identify bias and how bias may be addressed, and identify gaps in access

- **Students** --
  - **Explore** the CMS [Mukurtu](#)
○ Discuss communities and attributes of communities (cultural, professional, knowledge domains, sub-Reddits, Twitter cultures, etc.)

● Instructor --
  ○ Demonstrate various tools and methods of metadata assessment (word cloud guessing, sorting, visualization, etc.)

● Students --
  ○ Use various tools and methods to investigate the metadata

● Instructor --
  ○ Demonstrate the assessment rubric

● Students --
  ○ Investigate a few original collections that metadata is drawn from, and use the rubric to assess the standards and policies related to metadata development.

● Students --
  ○ Discuss and Identify possible cultural bias, knowledge gaps, inclusive/exclusive approaches to the metadata

● Students --
  ○ Identify gaps in access -- Who may not discover this collection because some information is missing? Who is the primary contributor? Who is the primary audience of this collection? Who is excluded from sharing their knowledge? Are the labels useful for finding information?

4.0 Enhancing Metadata

Enhance metadata for use by a specific user group. Keywords, enhanced description, coverage, or additional fields

● Instructor --
  ○ Discuss sharing metadata with the collection creators and working collaboratively to enhance metadata.

● Students --
  ○ Use Criterion 3 of the assessment rubric to identify methods of making knowledge about the dataset more robust

● Instructor --
  ○ Demonstrate various tools and methods of refining and enhancing data (Excel, OpenRefine, or Regex depending on instructor's experience and comfort level).

● Students --
  ○ Identify methods of making access to the collection more robust, identify schemas, local elements, controlled vocabularies, local terms, which might be used.

Assessment

● Students identify issues which surround the curation of information by discussing biases and knowledge gaps.
● Students successfully use tools to collect and refine data.
● Students are empowered to research and to contribute to record-keeping.

Reflection

Metadata records are living records, which should be revisited and revised when new information is acquired or new perspectives require re-cataloging. As the myriad communities responsible for metadata creation, curation, and use continue to evolve, they need to consider best practices which allow for knowledge experts to collaborate and contribute. Perhaps we need interfaces which allow experts to fork and create enhanced collections. Whatever solutions are devised, subject experts should be involved as thinkers, contributors, and collaborators.