Culture in Transit: Digitizing and Democratizing NYC’s Cultural Heritage

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http://www.mnlylc.org/cit/
“How might we leverage libraries as a platform to build more knowledgeable communities?”
CULTURE IN TRANSIT

Digitizing & Democratizing Metropolitan New York’s Cultural Heritage
Project Goals

- On-site digitization service
- Expose hidden collections/preserve local history
- Materials added to Online Digital Collections Portals
- On ramp to DPLA
- Mobile digitization model
• Funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
• Partnership with Metropolitan New York Library Council, Queens Library and Brooklyn Public Library
• 18 month project beginning in Feb 2015
Mobile Digitization Equipment
- First 3 months - ramp up and planning
- Job postings/hire 3 Mobile Digitization Specialists
- Decided on mobile digitization equipment for kits
- Purchased, tested, replaced, refined
Mobile Digitization Equipment

Flatbed Scanner

Copy-Stand

Outreach
Flatbed Scanner: Epson V Series

- V600 and V800 models: Excellent quality & capability for negatives
- SilverFast software for color management & pre-scan functionality
- V800: Extended capability vs. additional weight
Copy-Stand

- Canon EOS Rebel T5 DSLR
- Inverted tripod
- Fluorescent & LED lighting
- Muslin backdrop

Original Lights

LED Lights
Outreach

Interactive Resources:
Historic photographs slideshow & comparison
Oral history listening station
Community mapping
Transporting Digitization Equipment

- We love our wheeled Pelican cases!
- Don’t underestimate overall weight
Cultural Heritage Institution Scanning at METRO
New York City (+ Westchester)
Goals: METRO

- DPLA and ESDN
- Support needs of our smaller/underfunded members
- Pilot small-scale digitization service for members
- Collections to seed DCMNY
- Learn about our Member needs - digitization and related
Institutional Scanning - METRO
Onsite work

Offsite work
Choosing Partners

Culture in Transit (CIT) Interest Form

If you chose option two above, please briefly tell us more about these materials.

Please provide collection title and a brief description of the materials in the collection (subject matter/themes, as well as material types, e.g. photographs, postcards, pamphlets, etc.).

What is the size of the collection?

Please provide approximate number of items you would like to see digitized. If the items are made up of multiple pages (pamphlets, etc.), please provide total page count, or average number of pages per item. This will provide a rough sense of how long it will take to digitize the collection. CIT aims to visit host institutions for a 1 to 2 week period and is looking for small to medium sized collections to digitize.

To what extent are the materials currently organized and described?

How are the materials currently organized (boxes, folders, etc.)? What metadata exists for the materials (e.g., records, spreadsheet, finding aid, etc.)?

Have you digitized any material from your collections before?

Small-scale or grant-funded digitization projects (not digitization on demand services for patrons).

Options: 
- No
- Yes
Choosing Partners

- Quality (cohesive, significant)
- Feasibility (material type, #s, condition)
- Collection status (processed, cataloged, rights?)
- Practicalities (location, physical space, security, contact person, timeline)
Choosing Partners

Site Visits:

- View / Assess Materials
- Go to Location/View Space
- Meet with staff
Wildlife Conservation Society
LGBT Community Center
New York Academy of Medicine
General Society for Mechanics & Tradesmen
The Grolier Club
Hostos Community College
White Plains Public Library
Yeshiva University
Bronx Community College
Facts & Figures

So far.....

- 10 METRO member institutions visited
- Over 1,600 items digitized
- Collections online - dcmny.org
- 8 collections in DPLA
- Others harvested - should be there soon!
LGBT Center: Unique & Historically Important
Hostos Community College: Celebration of Local Culture
Yeshiva University: Oversize & Inaccessible
Community Scanning at Brooklyn Public Library and Queens Library
Community Scanning
Community Scanning
Queens Library, Brooklyn Public Library
Community Scanning in Brooklyn

- Greenpoint
- Williamsburg
- Clinton Hill
- Park Slope
- Flatbush
- Dyker Heights
- East New York
- Bed-Stuy
- Canarsie
- Sheepshead Bay
Not Just Libraries!

Boys and Girls High School
Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

Green-Wood Cemetery
Brooklyn

Emanuel United Church of Christ
Woodhaven, Queens

Neir’s Tavern
Woodhaven, Queens
How it Works - Event Planning

- Site Selection and Visit
- Scheduling
- Outreach planning
- Promo Materials
- Plan for Set up

St. Albans Community Library
How it Works - Day of Event

- Donors work one on one with staff
- Select materials to be digitized
- Prepare folder of materials for scanning
Working on Paper: Consent & Metadata

Brooklyn Public Library
Informed Consent and Copyright Permission
For Images and Personal Documents

Participant’s Name:
Address:
Phone:
Email:

I am at least eighteen years of age (if under the age of eighteen, consent must be signed by parent/legal guardian) and voluntarily agree to share my interview, image, and personal documents with Brooklyn Public Library.

I understand that the following items may be created from the items I share:
- Professional materials
- Additional digital derivatives
- Video clips
- Social media posts

I understand that my items may be distributed to the public for educational purposes, including formats such as print, public programming, and the Internet.

I agree to freely share my items under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Unported License. This means that I retain the copyright to my material, but the public may freely copy, modify, and share these items for noncommercial purposes under the same terms if they include the original source information.

Furthermore, I agree to hold the Brooklyn Public Library, its affiliates and branches harmless against any claim, action, loss, damage or alleged infringement of any copyright or trademark, or other third-party property rights, caused by or arising from the publication, exhibition or release of my personal documents furnished to the Brooklyn Public Library.

I understand that I will receive no compensation for the material I share. In return, Brooklyn Public Library agrees to provide me free copy of the scanned items at the time of digitization.

Any exceptions to this agreement (such as a request for anonymity) must be listed below:

Permission granted:

Parent’s Signature
Date

Questions?

Contact Manager of Special Collections, by email: 718-230-3707, or libsp@bpl.org

Queens Memory Submission Information Form

Photographs:

Date photograph was taken:

Location of photograph (specific address if possible):

Name of photographer:

Name(s) of person/people in the photo:

Name of event taking place in photo:

Organizations represented in photo:

Make/model of camera and software used:

Measurements (height x width) or 5 x 8 4 x 6 inch:

Additional Notes: any or all of the following information:
- Subject of this photo
- Relationship between photographer and the event taking place in the photo
- Description of events in the photo

There may also be another form in a black CD along with this form: Consent Agreement and Disclaimer of Interest. Please read all instructions (if applicable).
How it Works - Scanning

- Staff digitize items, save properly
- Load external HD with all donations
- Load thumbdrive for donor
Donors take away....

- The materials they shared
- Thumbdrive of scans
- Consent form
- Our contact information
- What is on your thumbdrive handout
- Personal digital archiving brochure
After the Event: Processing
Pond to Lake to Ocean
Community Partnerships

- Community groups as a liaisons
- Targeted outreach
- Access to new communities
- Language support
- Credibility
- Focused documentation of traditionally under-represented communities
My Baryo, My Borough
Greater Ridgewood Youth Council
Community Partners Established

Asian Americans for Equality

Brooklyn Connections

Douglaston / Little Neck Historical Society

Five Boro Story Project

Forest Hills Asian Association

Good Neighbors of Park Slope

Greater Ridgewood Youth Council

My Baryo, My Borough

Woodhaven Cultural and Historical Society
Outcomes

- Diversify / democratize archives at BPL and QL
- Make materials available publicly online
- Add to historical record
- Provide opportunity for under-represented to share their stories
Sharing What We Learned
Conference Presentations

Local/Regional: METROCon
Archivists Roundtable
NYC Digital Humanities
MARAC

National: NCPH
DPLAFest
NSDR Symposium
Personal Digital Archiving
ALA
Welcome to Culture in Transit

Culture in Transit is a partnership between the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO), the Brooklyn Public Library and Queens Library to bring mobile scanning equipment to smaller libraries, archives, museums, and the communities they serve. We are one of 22 projects to win the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation’s Knight News Challenge on Libraries. Our work falls into two main areas:

- **Community Events** (Queens Library and Brooklyn Public Library): We bring our mobile digitization kit to library branches and invite residents to bring in family photos and memorabilia. We scan the materials, which are returned to the donors along with a flash drive of digital copies. The digital copies are also included in own digital catalogs, and shared with the Digital Public Library of America.

- **Institutional Scanning** (METRO): We bring our mobile digitization kit to METRO member institutions across New York City and Westchester. We scan selected...
Putting local history on the map: Institutional scanning at White Plains Public Library

Posted on October 20, 2015 by Caroline Catchpole

At the end of September, I spent two weeks onsite at White Plains Public Library’s latest METRO host institution for the project. They were an excellent candidate for the project: History, Culture, and Transit – they had really interesting material in photographs from their local history collection, which, while mentioned on their website, are not currently catalogued and so not widely accessible to their patrons or wider audiences. They also do not have a platform to publish any digitized material online. The digitized collection will be uploaded to METRO’s Digital Culture site, which will elevate this collection to many new audiences.

White Plains, the county seat of Westchester, has a rich and varied history, which is reflected in the collection of images I scanned whilst there. I was able to scan 246 unique items, with almost half of these images taken by John Rosch (1854-1935). The collection represents important local events to national and international events, from the 1948 Parade of Progress to soldiers marching through the streets of Westchester County during World War One.

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So what’s in a kit?

Posted on July 23, 2015 by Caroline Catchpole

This post focuses on the mobile digitization kits and what they contain. Below, we have compiled a comprehensive list of all items that are included in each kit. We see this list almost as a first draft of equipment for the project and expect that the list will evolve as we embark on digitization initiatives.

We see this list as a starting point for those interested in digitization. It is not exhaustive, as we plan to add additional items to the list as we progress.

The costs listed for these items represent the cost of each item and do not include shipping costs. We have purchased three of each item, one for each of the participating institutions. The costs have fluctuated since the time of our purchase, so our buyers should consider the price at the time of purchase.

Scanning Kit

**Please note that we are including pricing information for the scanners, the Epson V600 and the Epson V700. These scanners are not compatible with each other, so you may need to select different scanners for different institutions or projects.**

Creative Commons Licenses: How They Work and Why We Use Them

Posted on January 26, 2016 by Sarah

Founded in 2001, Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that provides free legal tools to promote the sharing of knowledge and creativity by allowing creators to manage their work’s copyright restrictions and public domain status. It’s not a substitute for copyright, but it does allow creators to choose from one of six licenses to retain their rights and copyright holders while allowing for flexibility in how the work can be used by others. There is no need to register with Creative Commons, creators need only to identify the license in the HTML code or on some part of their image, text, webpage or rights field.

The Licenses

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License:

This license lets others distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon your work, even commercially, as long as they credit you for the original creation. This is the most accommodating of licenses offered.

Launching soon...
CULTURE IN TRANSIT TOOLKIT

Digitizing and democratizing Metropolitan New York’s Cultural Heritage.

TELL ME MORE
Community

Introduction

Section One - Event Planning

Section Two - Outreach

Section Three - Event Overview

Section Four - Educational Resources

Section Five - Assessment

Section Six - Resources

Introduction

At community scanning events, we bring our mobile digitization kit to library branches and invite residents to bring in photos, documents and memorabilia. We scan the materials, which are returned to the donors with a flash drive of digital copies. The digital files are then included in the digital archives of our respective repositories, as well as ingested into the Digital Public Library of America. Our role in this process includes: selecting locations, scheduling events, doing outreach and collaborating with partners, facilitating the events, and doing the post-event cataloging and ingest of materials into our digital repositories.
Workflow Management

Workflow documentation and tracking tools to monitor progress are a good way to ensure all involved in a project are kept informed of progress and of their responsibilities.

We created a visual aid of the end-to-end CIT workflow at METRO to help us understand and communicate the steps involved in the project.

We used a checklist for every project partner we worked with to track every step of our work with them (detailed in the checklist are METRO centric tasks). It was kept in the team's Google Drive folders, ensuring everyone had access to it.
Section Six - Resources

Below is a list of all resources developed and used for community scanning events. These resources are located throughout this section but this list provides a quick-glance locator for the resources.

- Event Planning Checklist for Community Scanning Events.
- Sample Letter to Public Library Branches for Community Scanning Events.
- Letter and Consent Form for School Scanning Program.
- Metadata Collection Sheet for School Scanning Program.
- Sample Community Scanning Staffing Plan.
- Community Scanning Event Workflow and Procedure.
- Community Scanning Digitization Workflow.
- Informed Consent Form for Community Scanning Events - Queens Library.
- Informed Consent Form for Community Scanning Events - Brooklyn Public Library.
- Metadata Collection Sheet for Community Scanning Events - Queens Library.
- Metadata Collection Sheet for Community Scanning Events - Brooklyn Public Library.
- Community Scanning Events Interactive Outreach Model.