CULTURE IN TRANSIT

Digitizing & Democratizing Metropolitan New York’s Cultural Heritage
Early Observations from Culture in Transit

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Funded by the Knight Foundation News Challenge on Libraries

Partnership with Metropolitan New York Library Council, Queens Library and Brooklyn Public Library

Collected material will also be shared with the Digital Public Library of America
Digitization Equipment

- V Series Epson Scanner
- Camera Copy Stand
- Equipment Cases
- Laptop
Equipment Successes

- Scanner
- Pelican carry cases
- Digitization as a mobile service
Success with oversize, rolled items
Equipment Challenges

- Copy-stand components

- Weight
  - Community Kit: Approx 66lbs
  - Institution Kit: Approx 85lbs

- Portability
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 our digital catalog, 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 collections and make them available on METRO’s digital platform and the Digital Public Library of America.

So what's in a kit?

This post focuses on our mobile digitization kits and what they contain. Below, we have compiled a comprehensive list of all items in our kits:

- Not all equipment features in each kit due to the different community events and at institutions.
- We see this list almost as a first draft of equipment for the projects. We thought important when embarking on a digitization initiative, and we use the kit more, we will talk more about what we use at and additional purchases we've made to enable us to digitize more.

The costs listed for these items represent the cost of each kit. We have purchased three of most items (one for each, METRO) and have fluctuated since the time of our purchases — our buying to the end of June 2015.

Scanning Kit

**Please note that we are including pricing information and links for two different scanners, the Epson V600 and the Epson V800. These scanners have slightly different specifications, and are most appropriate for different institutions or projects. Future documentation will discuss the differences between these scanners in more detail.**
Institutional Scanning
METRO

- 7 METRO member institutions visited
- Over 950 unique items digitized
- 4 CIT collections in METRO’s Digital Culture so far
- 3 CIT collections in DPLA so far
Barriers to Participation

Institution perspective
- Lack of Staff
- Time pressures
- Inaccessibility of collections
- Communication

Project perspective
- Time
- Suitability of material
Community Scanning
Queens Library, Brooklyn Public Library

Brooklyn Public Library
- 14 public events
- 300 unique items digitized
- Close to 100 items cataloged on BPL

Queens Library
- 15 public events
- 353 unique items digitized
- 300 items cataloged on queensmemory.org
  and prepared for ingest into DPLA
Barriers to Participation

Outreach / Inreach

- Press Coverage
- Advertising
- Friends of the Library groups

Language

- Bilingual outreach materials
- Volunteer translators
- Partnerships
Barriers to Participation

Meaningful Participation / Interactive Events

- Educational resources
- Local historic photographs
- Oral history listening station
- Interactive activity stations

Tools for teaching archival literacy

Trust in Libraries as Archival Custodians

- Focus on inreach to existing library users
- Community & school partnerships
Community Partnerships

- Community groups as liaisons
- Targeted outreach
- Access to new communities
- Language support
- Credibility
- Focused documentation of traditionally under-represented communities
Recent Partnerships

My Baryo, My Borough
- Documenting the Filipino-American community in Queens
- Collected over 100 unique photographs

Greater Ridgewood Youth Council
- Teen service learning project on local history
- Oral history, digitization and cataloging training

Local Historical Societies
- Digitization training
- Co-sponsorship and promotion of scanning events
Creating a replicable model
Questions?
Contact Us!

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