CULTURE IN TRANSIT

MBQE

Digitizing & Democratizing Metropolitan New York’s Cultural Heritage
- 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
Institutional Scanning
METRO

- 8 METRO member institutions visited
- Over 1,000 unique items digitized
- 4 CIT collections in METRO’s Digital Culture so far
- 3 CIT collections in DPLA so far
New York Academy of Medicine, Carte de Visite Collection

The Carte de Visite Collection consists of 223 late 19th and early 20th century photographs of national and international figures in medicine and public health. Many are from the New York area.

Learn More About the Collection

Carte de Visite, A.S. Bull
Carte de visite of A.S. Bull, taken by photographic studio Rockwood and Co.

Hostos Community College, Hostos Arts and Culture Collection

The Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture Collection includes 101 promotional cards featuring original artwork that documents musical performances, gallery exhibitions and art installations that have taken place at Hostos Community College. The cards illustrate the incredible variety of artists and performers who have come together at this dynamic South Bronx venue.

Learn More About the Collection

Sophy Concert Postcard
Postcard advertising a gala concert by Sophy, a Puerto Rican vocalist, held on November 14, 1998.

White Plains Public Library, White Plains Collection

The White Plains Collection is comprised of materials relevant to the history of White Plains, New York. Our digital collection contains photographs spanning from the late 19th to late 20th centuries. These 246 photographs document civic life, street scenes, and the dramatic change in the character of White Plains through suburban development and urban renewal.

Learn More About the Collection

13 Colonies Float in 1933 Parade

WCS Archives, Ephemera Collection

This digital collection includes 112 items from the Wildlife Conservation Society Archives' extensive collection of publications and printed ephemera created by WCS, which began in 1895, in the New York Zoological Society. Within this digital collection are materials related to events and venues at WCS’s Bronx Zoo and New York Aquarium and souvenirs from the New York Aquarium. Materials date from 1911 to 1992, with the bulk dating from the 1960s through the 1980s.

Learn More About the Collection

Admission ticket for grand re-opening of the Farm-in-the-Zoo exhibit

Admission ticket for re-opening of Farm-in-the-Zoo exhibit at the New York Zoological Park on May 7, 1957

Admission ticket for opening of new Great Apes House exhibit

Admission ticket for opening of new Great Apes House exhibit at the New York Zoological Park on October 12, 1950

Admission ticket for event, "Breakfast by the Sea," event, May 19, 1985, New York Aquarium
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
Recent Community 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
Project Documentation

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?

Posted on July 22, 2015 by Caroline Catchpole

This post focuses on our mobile digitization kits and what’s included.

Below, we have compiled a comprehensive list of all items included in our kits. Not all equipment features in each kit due to the different activities and community events and at institutions.

We see this list almost as a first draft of equipment for the kit, one that we are still working on. Given that we are using the kit more, we will talk more about what we use, and additional purchases we’ve made to enable us to use our digitization needs.

The costs listed for these items represent the cost of each item that we have purchased. Some of the kit costs have fluctuated since the time of our purchases – our buying from the end of June 2015.

Scanning Kit:

** Please note that we are including pricing information as of the time of writing. Please check with the manufacturer on specific items.

Our Mobile Copy-stand: The Review

This post is largely based on my experience of using the copy-stand for Culture in Transit’s work with institutions. Maggie & Sarah’s experience of using the copy-stand in a community event setting varies and they’ll address their thoughts/experience separately.

A copy-stand is a device used to capture images or text with a camera. It is used by cultural heritage institutions as an alternative to book scanners or flatbed scanners to digitize historical material.

Generally, a copy-stand is kept in one place, hence in static and (broadly speaking) thought does not need to be given to weight or portability of the equipment. A copy-stand usually consists of a baseboard with a center column attached to it, to which the camera can be mounted. Photographic lights are mostly also used as part of the set-up.

From the outset, we knew we needed to get creative with our interpretation of a copy-stand that could be transported as part of our mobile kit. Heavy baseboards and center columns would just not be feasible, so our attention turned to tripods and material backdrops as alternatives.

The CIT team, as well as some colleagues at METRO have prior experience digitizing historical material, so we knew broadly what pieces of kit we needed. What we didn’t have, was experience building a kit whose first requirement was to be mobile. In today’s age, with all of the advances made in developing lightweight materials, you’d think it would be easy to compile a kit of super lightweight components. As we soon learned, this is not the case.

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