Partnering with Scholars
Exposing a City’s Hidden Collections

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Uncovering New Chicago Archives Project

• 3-year Mellon-funded project
• Partners
  – Library
  – Faculty
  – Graduate Students
  – Local Archive-holding Institutions
• Precursor project: Mellon Officer’s Grant
UNCAP Goals

• City-wide hidden collections initiative
  – Identifying and processing collections supporting African American cultural history

• Faculty-Library collaboration
  – User-driven collections, programs, services
  – Process and preserve important research materials
  – Train graduate students to process collections in their field

• Cross-institutional discovery tool
Hidden Collections Initiative

• Library
  – Founding member of ARL *Special Collections Task Force* (2003 Working Conference at LC)
  – More Product, Less Process (Greene and Meissner)
  – Library-wide hidden collections initiative

• English Department Prof’ s Goldsby and Stewart
  – Post-depression, pre-civil rights era African American literary and cinema history
  – Mapping The Stacks: Mellon Officer’ s Grant
    • “to identify primary source materials (books, films, photographs, newspapers, magazines, manuscript archives, recorded oral histories, and other ephemera) in need of processing and cataloguing.”
Organizational Architecture

- **UNCAP**
  - **Mapping the Stacks (MTS)**
    - Jaqueline Goldsby
    - Jaqueline Stewart
    - CPL Vivian Harsh Collection
      - DuSable Museum
      - Chicago Defender
  - **University of Chicago Library**
    - Jazz Archive
    - Modern Poetry Collection
      - Travis Jackson
      - Robert von Hallberg
Organizational Architecture 2?
Related Initiatives

BMRC: Black Metropolis Research Consortium

Mapping the Stacks (MTS)

Jaqueline Goldsby

CPL Vivian Harsh Collection

DuSable Museum

Jaqueline Stewart

University of Chicago Library

Jazz Archive

Travis Jackson

Modern Poetry Collection

Robert von Hallberg

UNCAP

Chicago Defender

The University of Chicago Library
Faculty-Library Collaboration: User-driven Collections, Programs, Services

• Not just consultation - Not just scholarship
  – User involvement in Library decision-making and processing

• No one size fits all
  – Processing level dependent on
    • Nature of collection
    • Institutional context and mission
    • Needs of researchers using collection

• Faculty as emissaries in community for collection-building
Faculty-Library Collaboration: Training Graduate Students

• Primary source research skills
  – Hunting is fun, but overwhelming
  – Discovering patterns and relationships

• Fostering interdisciplinary investigation and conceptualization
  – English (including Poetry and Poetics), Cinema and Media Studies, History, Art History, and Music

• Discovery for seminar and dissertation research
Faculty-Library Collaboration: Faculty Benefits

• Discover new areas of research
  – Curriculum development
  – Scholarship production
• Student recruitment
• Fostering collaborative research in humanistic fields
  – Breaking the mold of individualistic research
  – Science model
Cross-institutional Discovery Tool

• One Tool For:
  – Multiple institutions with differing needs
  – Hierarchical relationships within project
  – Collection survey and finding aids
  – Multiple formats
    • Personal and institutional papers
    • Radio transcripts
    • Image collections
    • Oral histories
    • Sound recordings
    • Newspaper clippings
    • Stock arrangements
    • Etc.
Challenges and Opportunities

• Training students and faculty in archival standards
  – Ease vs. expertise
• Marrying goals of faculty and library
• Politics of inter-institutional cooperation vs. user needs
  – 800 lb. gorilla problem
• Collaborations with libraries in other areas undertaking similar initiatives
Architecture
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