

# ***BAD Times* and Good Stuff at the University of Arkansas: University Archives, Student Access, and Promoting Diversity in the Special Collections**

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## **Abstract:**

In February 2012, the Special Collections at the University of Arkansas Libraries released *BAD Times: a Digital Collection of the Black Americans for Democracy Newspapers*. The project provided access to digital versions of twenty issues of the newspaper published by the first African American student organization at the University of Arkansas. This article addresses rationales for taking on the project, the methodology employed, and outcomes. The project represented an outreach opportunity that would allow the Special Collections Department to connect with diverse student bodies on campus while setting forth a model for future digital initiatives. How successful the digital outreach has been and what the department has learned through the process is guiding strategic planning as the University's Libraries strive to promote both the uniqueness and educational potential of its collections.

## **Introduction**

In February 2012, the Special Collections at the University of Arkansas Libraries released *BAD Times: a Digital Collection of the Black Americans for Democracy Newspapers*. The project provided open access to digital versions of twenty issues of the newspaper published by the first African American student organization at the University of Arkansas. All special collections libraries must choose what collections to prioritize for digitization, and that choice must weigh several factors. In addition, trying to make those collections that would be most heavily used by researchers more accessible, special collections have to consider how best to pursue outreach objectives, as well as how best to leverage available resources in order to achieve products that conform to archival best practices while fitting well with departmental and institutional strategic planning. For a special collections that also has the responsibility of managing and growing its university archives, questions of representation in the archives of social issues and diversity, and how the archives reflect and make accessible the complex story of their university, also requires careful deliberation. *BAD Times* offered the University of Arkansas Special Collections the opportunity to grapple with these questions, while seeking to release a new digital collection quickly that would be useful for the communities the university serves for years to come.

This case study examines how the *BAD Times* project allowed the department to pursue several objectives simultaneously as we continue to develop our digitization program, refine procedures and hone in on potential future targets. This digital collection includes newspapers published by Black Americans for Democracy (BAD) from 1971 to 1977. Founded in the months after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968, BAD was active on the Fayetteville, Arkansas campus during most of the 1970s. The organization published newspapers under three different titles: The *BAD Times*, Black Americans for Democracy News, and Times (Black Americans for Democracy).<sup>1</sup> From conception in November 2011, when a digital collection was put forward as an achievable goal for the Libraries to produce in recognition of the next Black History Month, through a few preliminary meetings and the project's completion, Special Collections took just over three months to produce the digital collection. With lessons learned and a growing list of other suitable collections to make digitally available, the department emerged from the project ready for the next challenge. This article discusses what we learned from the process, including what goals the project achieved and what lessons it left us with.

## **Past Digital Initiatives**

The University of Arkansas Libraries' Special Collections has used CONTENTdm for digital exhibits since 2007. The department has studied options for digital delivery platforms for several years, and it has considered whether to continue with CONTENTdm or to pursue other platforms, some of which have been examined through other trial projects, that might better meet content delivery aspirations. The department has also considered how best to design and execute digitization projects that are both discreet and manageable given limited resources and robust enough to prove useful to patrons pursuing deep research interests. Early digital exhibits emphasized historical themes and drew from disparate archival and print collections. More recently, the department has sought to use CONTENTdm to provide access to collections digitized in their entirety.

Like many academic archives, the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections must be selective in choosing digitization projects that fulfill several objectives simultaneously in order to maximize the impact of the limited human resources available. Digitization projects should ideally make important collections more accessible for as many members of our potential audience as possible while also aligning with Libraries and University-wide initiatives regarding institutional mission. While digitization does not substitute for conservation, projects should help protect collections that are frequently requested by researchers that also have condition concerns, especially given the department's limited resources. As the department evaluates potential digitization projects, it has become evident that the department's preference is for projects that are not overly expansive in terms of subject matter and content scope that could disrupt its ability to accomplish other short-term and recurring duties.

Although published as a digital collection from the Special Collections, staff members from the entire library were involved at different stages in the project from cataloging and initial scanning to website design, content description, and editing transcripts. The scale of the finished project was modest, only twenty objects. However, the project was completed on a compressed timeline by the standards of the institution requiring a significant dedication of time and energy by faculty, professional staff, and student assistants. There were several reasons for the project to become a priority for the department. As indicated on the webpage for the final product, "by providing the entire holdings in digital form, the University Libraries can promote even greater use of the collection, while also preserving the important publications in their original form."

## **Reasons for Digitization Project**

When Special Collections considered this new digitization project, there were readily apparent outreach goals that publishing *BAD Times* would help achieve. The department had not undertaken a scanning project targeting an entire newsprint collection before, so the project also served as a test case for future endeavors. One major reason digitization was considered was student demand for access. Although the materials were fragile, student researchers consulted the issues frequently. The project served as a useful means of reaching out to our university students and other researchers, as well as a model for future projects.

The BAD collection was small and distinct enough that it was processed quickly, OCR text and usability were managed easily, and the project was accomplished without overly taxing limited staff resources. Although there was some concern about meeting short deadlines, the use of student workers, and other issues, the preliminary work and collaboration among the library professionals involved allowed a very good product to be completed within a relatively short amount of time.

The department decided to move forward with digitization of *BAD Times* on a three-month calendar and before other potential collections for a number of reasons. The physical collection was proving to be popular with students, particularly those associated with the current Black Student Association (BSA) and others working on research related to African Americans on campus. Although subject to the limited access as other manuscript collections in the archives' holdings, approximately ten student researchers were requesting the materials annually, as well as professional scholars.<sup>2</sup> The newspapers are an excellent resource concerning the student experience in the period just after widespread integration of the University of Arkansas main campus in Fayetteville. Also the condition of the paper was an important consideration as it was already placed under access restrictions because of rapid deterioration.

## **Complementing Libraries-wide Goals: Institutional Alignment**

Library administration supported the project in part because it dovetailed with other institutional initiatives, primarily the projects of the Diversity Committee. The Libraries actively promote diversity within the collections, diversity-based research projects among students and other researchers, and greater campus awareness of diversity issues. The *Bad Times* project very visibly serves to promote the history of diversity issues at the University. The digitization and promotion of the collection represents a good faith effort on part of the Libraries and the Special Collections department to strive for greater

diversity awareness and encourage student interest and access to related collections.



Fig. 1

From *Black Americans for Democracy News (BAD Times)*, December 12, 1974: The newspaper recorded early black participation in U of A social activities with the first black homecoming maids.

As part of the Libraries' and department's missions, we preserve the history of the University through the University Archives, housed in Special Collections. Integration and race relations are an essential part of the history of University of Arkansas. Although the University was the first public institution in the South to admit African American students voluntarily in the modern era, the percentage of non-white students remained very small—much lower than the state as a whole—well past full integration. African American students encountered significant cultural and social difficulties trying to attend the University until well into the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

Having the collection as a digital resource allows the department to actively participate in the historical discourse of the University and how that history fits into the broader narrative of race relations, integration, and higher education in the South.

One of the main drivers for the project, which included working on a tighter time frame than usually employed for collaborative digital projects, was to use the project as a commemoration of Black History Month. For the research services unit of Special Collections, initial interest in providing digital access was sparked by interactions with the University's Black Student Association (BSA), the descendent of the Black Americans for Democracy. BSA members often accessed the print collections. By making the newspapers more accessible, Special Collections hoped to augment the relationship with BSA and build future relationships with other similarly dedicated student researchers and organizations.

In the years since the *BAD Times* was undertaken, Special Collections has also increased collaborations with the University's Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education, including partnering for area "Juneteenth" programming, coordinating efforts for celebration of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday, and using archival photographs and documents in permanent and temporary exhibits in the Center's facilities. In fact, this recent exhibiting for campus recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. included selections from the *BAD Times* which had been digitized for the project under discussion.

### **Complementing Departmental Mission: Significance as a Resource**

The digital collection complements other notable archival collections within Special Collections related to African American and civil rights history, including the papers of L.C. and Daisy Bates, the civil rights activists and publishers of the Arkansas State Press. Several collections in the department's holdings pertain to the Little Rock Central High School desegregation crisis of 1957 and 1958, including the papers of Governor Orval E. Faubus, Pulaski County Superintendent of Schools Virgil

T. Blossom, and the Arkansas Council on Human Relations. Special Collections also holds a small manuscript collection with records of Black Americans for Democracy which has been processed and open for patron access. That collection includes some membership ledgers and notes from organizational meetings. Select materials related to civil rights have been made available through the digital exhibit, *Land of (Un)Equal Opportunity*, which the department released in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

Noted Arkansas author and University alumnus E. Lynn Harris has been celebrated by other University programs, including the Pryor Center for Oral and Visual History which published an oral history it collected from him.<sup>5</sup> Harris was also an editor and contributor to the BAD newspapers. The digital project helped expose some hidden writings of the now nationally celebrated author, while placing them in the context of the organizational and journalistic work being done by his colleagues and fellow African American students on campus in the 1970s.

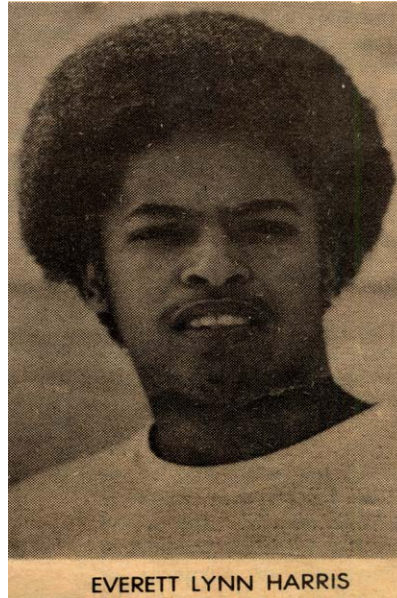


Fig. 2

From *Black Americans for Democracy News (BAD Times)*, September 10, 1974: Celebrated alumnus and author E. Lynn Harris was actively involved in activities while an undergraduate at the U of A, including working for the Times and serving as the Treasurer for BAD.

Imagery provided through the newspaper compliments other student collections, including the *Razorback* yearbooks that are currently not available electronically. These newspapers have supported a number of topics often requested in the Special Collections department, such as African American studies and integration of the University. Although the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville was officially integrated in the 1940s, only slow progress had been made by the 1970s, and the racial divide was still apparent across the campus during the time that the BAD student organization was publishing its periodical. That the newspaper was written by students gives it a unique place as a record of integration, distinguishing from other records that may have been written by an administrator or from outside the Black-student-centered organization. The entire newspaper was written from in the trenches by students actively engaged in the battle for more equal participation and opportunity on campus. Although officially integrated, the students who joined BAD and contributed to the paper knew that they still stood behind the color line.

Besides the journalistic facts and stories conveyed through the editorials and reporting, the tone and the voice of the articles tell a story in itself. The frustration can be felt in articles such as, "The U of A Submits Un-Affirmative Action Plan." Likewise, the celebration of a culture can be seen with the annual articles on Black Emphasis Week. The students report personal triumphs and University milestones, such as the first black student body president and first black homecoming maids. The candid photographs give the reader a tangible glimpse into the struggles and celebrations of this time. The popularity of the topics and high quality of materials resulted in frequent viewing of these newspapers. The frequent viewing coupled with the inexpensive newsprint resulted in a serious preservation issue. Some of the issues were literally crumbling.

The *BAD Times* digitization project touches on several areas of scholarly interest for archivists. The original collection is an example of the work of University Archives to document the development of Black Studies programs and Black awareness during the 1960s, an under documented and important period in the history of modern American universities. That work of University Archives is part of the larger responsibility of archivists to collect and make accessible records that reflect multiculturalism and racial and ethnic diversity. Archivists have the power to shape the historical record, and with that comes the opportunity to consider the social benefit that projects can offer.

## Literature Review

When evaluating the *BAD Times* project, its purpose and product can be understood in multiple ways. It can be viewed as an outreach program, promoting both diversity in the collections and the University Archives. As a digital collection it can be seen as a tool for instruction with primary sources, available not only to university students and faculty, but also within the wider community served by the University Libraries. Both its production and impact as a program of Special Collections is informed by the literature related to several aspects of archives and research libraries.

Duff and Cherry's 2008 article, "Archival Orientation for Undergraduate Students: An Exploratory Study of Impact" evaluates efforts to assess the impacts of archival holdings and services. Their study centers on the effectiveness of four sessions held at the Yale University Manuscripts and Archives. The authors place those sessions in the context of more than a decade of interest in evaluating the instructional and social effects of archival services, including finding aids and sessions held directly with classes visiting the facility. This paper acknowledges that the digitization project would have been pursued because of positive social impact of promoting and providing greater access to diversity-related collections. In addition, we seek to evaluate how digital accessibility has impacted use of those collections.

### A Resource for other Campus Faculty and Partners

When evaluating a project's impact, we must also weigh its success as a resource for teaching faculty in other disciplines and students. Marcus Robyns argues that archivists have a responsibility to work with instructors to develop critical thinking skills among students since archivists hold a unique position to make the essential component of critical thinking, primary evidence, available.<sup>7</sup> His 2004 article, "The Archivist as Educator," was published in the wake of new programs by the Association of College and Research Libraries among others to encourage the critical use of digital materials as primary resources.

Dupont and Yakel provide models for transitioning from a collections-centric to user-centric model for assessing the impact of Special Collections.<sup>8</sup> Among other issues they discuss in their article "What's So Special about Special Collections? Or, Assessing the Value Special Collections Bring to Academic Libraries" is the need to take the idea that Special Collections provide a great deal of value in terms of instruction and outreach, and continue to refine the ways in which the metrics of use can be gathered and understood regarding impact. In the context of the University of Arkansas Libraries, we can see whether a project has been incorporated into LibGuides and other resources provided by the Libraries tailored for specific classes and research groups as compared to whether other faculty and campus programs have used the collection independently, and if so, what were the outcomes?

### Outreach Beyond Dedicated Instruction

The outreach necessary to promote new resources such as digital collections, as well as assistance in their use, goes beyond dedicated instruction sessions with students to include connecting collections with constituents off campus. Archivists have long recognized the need for outreach, and exhibits are one of the most frequently used tools. In recent years, archivists have recognized the corollary nature of digital exhibits as a powerful outreach tool. The results are being recognized by the wider library and scholarly communities as well as the general public. In an article in 2001, Ron Chepesiuk quotes Carl Fleishhauer, "As we move into the 21st century, digitization is going to predominate in the world of libraries, and what is happening in special collections is a strong representation of that trend."<sup>9</sup> Chepesiuk goes on to list the benefits of digitization, including creating new users, preserving fragile materials by reducing handling, providing better access through digital tools, such as searching and zooming, and creating additional description, cataloging and classification.

Part of our job as archivists is to make these collections known to current and potential researchers. William J. Maher's 1992 book *The Management of College and University Archives* encourages archivists to reach outside the archives, and he lists the goals of outreach: encourage use, educate persons about phenomena documented in the archive, demonstrate how archival information can create a better understanding of the past and present, and communicate insights from specific archival holdings.<sup>10</sup> He also reminds archivists that outreach involves highly local choices about what the needs of the institution are and what can be accomplished with available resources.<sup>11</sup> Tamar Chute in her article "Selling the College and University Archives: Current Outreach Perspectives" stresses strongly the importance of outreach to keep the archives active and open, stating "Outreach is a powerful tool: it teaches the university community about the history of the institution as well as about the value of the documents that the institution creates."<sup>12</sup> The author goes on to state that outreach is important and must be done even with insufficient staff and large backlogs, for without outreach archives can lose visibility,

support, and possibly their very existence.<sup>13</sup> The author states that exhibits are one of the most common forms of outreach and that websites are also a useful tool.<sup>14</sup>

These digital exhibits have provided a new tool for reaching out to under-represented groups and highlighting the diversity in our collections. In 2008, Kathryn M. Neal talks about the importance of collecting materials from under-represented groups in her book chapter “Giving It More than the Old College Try: Documenting Diverse Populations in College and University Archives.” She states that outreach methods are necessary to create ties with these groups and that these donors can help convey the mission of the archives to other groups on campus. Neal states, “Preserving the records of these populations keeps the archives viable in an increasingly multicultural world and fulfills the mission of an institution while maintaining its historical memory.”<sup>15</sup>

Welch, Hoffius, and Fox in “Archives, Accessibility, and Advocacy” explore the question of how a special collections both increases its profile and maintains its relevancy. Although the authors specifically address the place of special collections within an institution that emphasizes medical and scientific learning, the question applies to a growing land grant institution such as the University of Arkansas as well, whose strategic goals include achieving greater stature as a research institution, growing the student population in size, and increasing its diversity.<sup>16</sup> The authors state that by analyzing user groups, sources of possible partnership, and thinking about the collections in new ways, they could provide unique resources for the campus that bolstered the image of special collections while making resources better known and more accessible.<sup>17</sup>

### **Departmental Workflow and Best Practices**

Accomplishing those goals of providing unique resources that are adequately promoted and accessible is contingent upon how successfully a special collections department completes projects within existing resources and how methods and staff work assignments can be enhanced to improve and increase its digital projects. In “A Collaborative Workflow for the Digitization of Unique Materials,” Gueguen and Hanlon address one of the challenges facing any special collections in an academic library that considers a digitization project, how to establish a workflow that will allow a special collections unit to scale up digitization with existing resources and do so in a way that will allow systematic digitization of unique materials in its holding going forward.<sup>18</sup> The authors offer this conclusion: “By focusing on ways to streamline the process of building digital collections, and building upon the existing workflows and expertise of the organization as is possible and effective, digital collection-building can become a core function of the library, and digital collections can begin to build to a critical mass, so that researchers can come to the web to conduct systematic original research using digitized primary sources.”<sup>19</sup> The *BAD Times* provided an opportunity to digitize a collection in its entirety using workflows that were largely already in place. Ideally, the success of the project, albeit small, offers a means to take on much larger projects within the University Archives and with other substantial groups of records in Special Collections.

Campus newspapers are good candidates for digital collections for several reasons: they highlight student involvement and writing and are instantly relevant to current campus members and alumni. Writing in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jennifer Howard reports on the success of Drake University’s newspaper digitization project.<sup>20</sup> Student newspapers are low-hanging fruit, so to speak, for academic libraries ready to take on larger digitization projects that offer very predictable and worthwhile outcomes in terms of patron access. Like Drake and many other universities, Arkansas has a well-established Journalism Department. Student journalism has seen periods of excellence, and the paper and microfilm holdings of the student paper, *The Arkansas Traveler*, are frequently accessed as sources of vital information about the University’s programs and events, the evolution of the campus and student organizations, and local history. By digitizing the *BAD Times*, Special Collections was able to test the way student papers could be made accessible through our digital content management system, CONTENTdm.

### **Collecting for Future Research**

Sarah Buchanan and Katie Richardson recognize the challenges of collecting student work with their article “Representation through Documentation: Acquiring Student and Campus Life Records through the Bruin Archives Project.”<sup>21</sup> The authors detail some of the challenges including establishing contact with the ever changing student leaders. At the same time they recognize the importance of these materials. “The materials are valuable markers of social issues and events pertinent to researchers who are documenting student experiences during a specific time period.” This article documents a specific project to use students to recruit and process new student collections. In our case, the use of the *BAD Times* paper collection resulted in the donation of a relating manuscript collection for the group which produced the *BAD Times*. We hoped that digitizing the *BAD Times* might lead to more donations.

In "Digitizing Cherokee Cultures: Libraries, Students, and the Reservation," Timothy B. Powell discusses issues and triumphs associated with digitizing a Cherokee newspaper. He discusses the importance of making these resources available so that the voice of this specific minority group may be heard beyond mainstream history. He notes that this resource created a "remarkably collaborative sense of community as the students thoughtfully debate the accuracy of Cherokee vs. white sources" and how "fascinating to immerse oneself so fully in the day-to-day life of the Cherokee."<sup>22</sup> This is exactly the effect we wished to produce with the *BAD Times* by bringing day to day life and trials of black students during this time period to light. Powell goes on to recount a specific event in Cherokee history and how the Cherokee version of the story "personalizes a historical moment that the students had learned in a much more sanitized form from school textbooks."<sup>23</sup> Likewise the *BAD Times* adds another voice to the discussions of issues like Affirmative Action plans that is different from mainstream accounts. Powell goes on to explain how the project inspired the establishment of the Institute of Native American Studies. Our plans for the *BAD Times* were much more modest, though we did hope to draw positive attention to Special Collections and hoped to attract new donors.

### **Utility as Source for Serious Scholars**

However significant archivists may believe collections are, how accessible they are will affect how heavily they are used by historians and students. Historians more and more would like to see digitized materials, especially well done projects that meet certain criteria. Alexandra Chassanoff recently published survey results about how historians use primary source material. She lists some of the desired attributes of digitized material, including collections hosted by reputable repositories, being able to access the entire collections, and digital materials as close to their original condition as possible.<sup>24</sup> Out of the respondents, 33% wanted "searchable online access to full runs of historical newspapers."<sup>25</sup> More respondents reported accessing newspapers online than in person. Although these results were published after our project, we did satisfy many of these criteria by digitizing the entire run of the newspaper and keeping the digital format as close as possible to the paper format.

Collecting and increasing access to archives on the experience of African American students during and after the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s is of great interest to historians. BAD emerged at the University of Arkansas just two years after the beginning of what Ibram Rogers has termed, the Black Campus Movement. Among the characteristics BAD shared with other student organizations that emerged around the country, largely through the creation of Black Student Unions, were the goals that American higher education be more relevant to black people, gaining access to more campus resources for Black Studies and black communities surrounding universities, and to have a greater voice in student government, social organizations, and publication. Rogers calls for "a concerted efforts among academics...to document the story of the Black Campus Movement" in order to provide the present generation with both a history of how universities became more diverse, as well as a greater awareness of where Black Studies and Black Student Unions originated. The *BAD Times* project makes the primary documentation of the early development of the "Black Campus" at the University of Arkansas available to African American students, all other students of campus history, and members of the wider community. Since the Black Campus Movement began nearly fifty years ago, the need to include African American intellectual and social contributions to American academic life has remained. Archivists have the responsibility to include the diversity inherent in the subject they are collecting on and to ensure that that diversity is accessible and visible.<sup>26</sup>



Dana C. Chandler, Black Emphasis Week '73 Speaker, raps with Darryl Lunon, Jackie Carr and Charles Cunningham.

Fig. 3

From *Black Americans for Democracy News (BAD Times)*, May 7, 1973: Black Emphasis Week was an annual event held on campus with guest speakers and social activities to celebrate a unique culture.

## Larger Social Impact

Archivists can endeavor to embrace the social issues represented in their collections while ensuring that their collections inform a diverse and instructive narrative of social change, civil rights, and economic and legal justice. Randall Jimerson in “Archives for All” discusses how archives can “commit themselves to active engagement.” By employing a social conscience in the resources they provide, archivists can embrace the power inherent in the practice of protecting knowledge and preserving records for future generations.<sup>27</sup> Archival institutions should consider the social benefit of the projects they consider taking on. We chose to highlight the growing racial diversity at the University of Arkansas of the late 1960s and 1970s and embrace a small body of records produced by a short-lived student organization, which pursued radical racial politics, as representative of the University’s archival records. While the University continues to strive for greater racial diversity, with a percentage of African American student still approximately 10% lower than the statewide percentage, the digital project provides representation for African American students organizing on campus at a time when the percentage of African American students was even lower. Jimerson urges archivists “to recognize that their social role has significant implications and high degree of power.”<sup>28</sup>

As Elizabeth Kaplan and others have shown, repositories play a vital role both ensuring not only that minority groups are represented in the archival record, but they also support the development of those communities.<sup>29</sup> The frequent use of the BAD collection by more recent members of the BSA was one factor in selecting the collection for digitization. In “Building a Participatory Culture: Collaborating with Student Organizations for Twenty-first Century Library Instruction,” Johnson, Clapp, Ewing, and Buhler explored the potential for collaborations with student organizations to, among other outreach and instruction enhancements, create new platforms for exploratory learning. Although the Librarian—Student Organization collaboration is underused, it offers a means to provide resources that we know students want.<sup>30</sup>

Dominique Daniel in her article “Documenting the Immigrant and Ethnic Experience in Americal Archives” addresses the choices that Archivists make in records appraisal in the context of discussing how to begin to view ethnicity as provenance. Daniel writes that, “The records cycles is...a continuous process of representation” and that an awareness of the political nature of the archivist’s hard choices allows those choices to be made consciously.<sup>31</sup> As Elizabeth Yakel and others show, appraisal and representation through arrangement and description is influenced by the opinions of archivists. Digital technologies, including the ability to provide access to entire collections through digital repositories, then compel archivists to continue to consider how records and the groups addressed by them are represented even as archivists continue their work in an environment increasingly aware of minority voices and cultural diversity.

## Process: From Idea to Product

For all of the intellectual aspirations and rationales considered before taking on a digitization project, large or small, the process of going from good idea, to work plan, to finished project, and ultimately, promotion and use can follow predictable and less anticipated courses. In the context of the BAD project, the initial work of the project was established as a student project of another librarian during her professional course of study. Angela Black, now with the Arkansas Technical University Libraries began scanning and metadata creation as a graduate student. What her work left behind regarding University of Arkansas materials was an intriguing treasure trove of items for her colleagues to re-discover and share.

The relatively small size of the collection suggested an in-house digitization project as the best way to preserve the collection. Each issue in the collection ranges from four to eight pages. While looking for a project to fulfill an online digital library class through Florida State University, Black created a jump-start to the project. Black volunteered to scan some of the issues for her project, and in exchange Special Collections got a start with the needed preservation scans. Preservation scans were made as a 600 dpi TIFF using Epson Scan software on a Epson Expressions Scanner, Model 1640XL with a 12" x 17" scanning bed. Due to the fragile condition of the papers, each paper was placed between two sheets of Mylar before scanning to help prevent further damage. Cropping and rotating of the original scans was done with Adobe Photoshop. Since the issues were mostly text based, we decided that a pdf with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) would be the easiest to use. The original TIFFs were converted to PDF and the individual pages were combined into complete issues using Adobe Acrobat X Pro version 10.1.1. For precise OCR results, we used ABBYY Fine Reader 10 Professional Edition, which allows editing of the OCR text. This was one of the most laborious task as many of the issues contained letters or words sadly worn from years of use which had to be input manually.

Eight issues were scanned in the first phase of the project. A student worker within Special Collections finished the scanning and OCR of the remaining issues. The metadata created for the original student project was revised and added to in order to meet the standards determined by Special Collections and Technical Services within the Libraries. Metadata was created using standard Dublin Core fields. Because the issues are full-text searchable, it was decided not to create issue specific subject headings. This information can be added in the future if time allows. Special Collections did create a controlled vocabulary list of authors, editors and contributors to the *BAD Times* so that patrons could easily pull together all issues for a particular author. The issues and metadata were batch loaded into CONTENTdm, which allows browsing and full text searching.

## Results: Did it Make a Difference?

In reviewing the project, there are some questions to be answered about the project's success and appropriateness as an outlet of departmental resources. For instance, how effective has the project been in providing access to the collection according to web usage statistics? Has there been an increase in student and faculty research use? How about instruction?

The project was of course an avenue for promoting the institution as a whole. There was significant media reaction after a press release and a feature on the Libraries' main website. Reaction from on-campus and off-campus news media was sudden.

University Archivist Amy Allen was interviewed for local television news, and radio and print news providers contacted the Libraries for further information. The Libraries' press release was also used on the University of Arkansas website headlines. In addition to the local news organizations that picked up the story, visited the department, and utilized the digital collection, national publications also reported on it.

We examined usage statistics in order to assess the benefit *BAD Times* digitization has provided for the department and considered the basic question: has the digital content been used? Has the project increased the department's online presence? To drill a little deeper, has the use of the project increased awareness of the original collection?

Usage peaked within days after the press release announcing the project. However, there have been periodic spikes of several users over the course of a few days since then. Since the project was released, the entry page for *BAD Times* received around 1500 page views. That number is not the highest for digital collections hosted by Special Collections of the University of Arkansas; however, the project accumulated that many uses in just over a year and half. Other projects produced by the department, including perennially popular topics such as material from the collections of Senator J. William Fulbright, have been open for several years longer. The *BAD Times* introduction page has remained as the seventh most visited page among the department's digital collections for several months. Total site views for the project exceeded 4,000, including more than a thousand visits to the browse page.

In manuscript form, the collection received five to ten requests for access per year. Although we have not determined how extensive the digital content has been utilized for various research projects, as far as we can tell, it is very evident that the awareness and accessing of the collection in digital form dwarfed the previous usage of the physical collection. Compared to the number of access requests prior to digitization, exponentially more people have viewed at least the collection description and presentation of the *BAD Times* newspapers than did when the materials were only available in print format.

## Lessons Learned

Going forward, the department recognizes other opportunities to both draw more attention to *BAD Times* and make the collection more viable for researchers. These opportunities include the addition of more digital collections related to African American history in Arkansas and at the University of Arkansas. Also, the opportunity exists for increasing hands-on instruction with the collection in relevant classes—African American studies, history, journalism—in order to allow it to be a more effective resource for instruction on campus. *BAD Times* is just one step towards an exciting expansion of digital accessibility for the Special Collections of the University of Arkansas Libraries.

Since this was the first full newspaper edition digitized by the U of A Special Collections, it served as a test for both our platform and our process for future projects. In order to meet the self-imposed deadline of three months in order to release during Black History Month, the project was completed in a shorter time period than previous projects. Although it was a challenge, the shortened timeframe proved an overall asset aiding the project's forward momentum. The process was also made easier by the involvement of multiple departments within the library according to their expertise. The Libraries Technical Services department was recruited to review and enhance the metadata, and the Web Services department worked on the user interface. Student workers were utilized for scanning and OCR. Even the origins of the project were begun by someone in another department, but it was the jump start needed to get the project going.

Because of the deadline, we had to prioritize what features we thought were most important for the project and for our patrons. It was essential to create preservation scans, which took longer than just use scans. One of the reasons we chose to scan this particular title was because the pages were literally crumbling. High quality scans were necessary so that the physical papers can be handled as little as possible going forward. Then, lower resolution use copies still needed to be created for web viewing. We would have liked to create topical subject headings but did not have enough time for this task. We made the decision to rely on the OCR rather than to have the subject headings. While we felt that OCR was very important to this project, it was still a very time consuming task. We were able to perform this task, reading and correcting each page, because of the relatively small number of pages in the project. This level of detail would not be able to be performed in a larger scale project. If OCR was required for a large scale project, alternative methods or different standards would need to be explored.

The platform, CONTENTdm, proved to satisfy all of our needs. We were able to batch import items and metadata. We were able to customize metadata and the user interface to meet our needs. The platform was capable of full text searching to fully utilize the OCR. This small project proved that a larger newspaper project would be suitable for this platform.

During this process, we identified some time consuming tasks that need to be evaluated per project as to the level of time able to spend on each task, including selection, preservation scans vs. use scans, subject headings, and standards for OCR. There are several points in our process that would be a benefit to duplicate in future projects: looking for existing opportunities outside the department; setting firm goals; using faculty, staff and students from other departments; and tying in with an issue of national importance.

Other lessons learned relate to how the timeframe impacted the usefulness of the project for teaching faculty outside of the Library and other campus partners. Greater alignment with teaching faculty and research programs early in the planning stages could have made *BAD Times* more immediately applicable for appropriate curricula. Although staffing for the project was accomplished through internal funding, the project could have served as outreach to the African American Studies Program. If that work had been accomplished, greater awareness of the availability of the collection to relevant courses could have been achieved earlier, as well as opening availability to interested student workers for *BAD Times* and future projects. Since the completion of *BAD Times*, the Special Collections has partnered with other academic units on campus, including the French department for digitization of records related to French colonial presence in Arkansas and later-day genealogical research. That partnership resulted in department access to state grant funding. Undergraduate students from the University's honors program and graduate students from History and Modern Languages are now being utilized for digital projects. The experience with *BAD Times* indicates that with larger projects in the future, more student workers and graduate students will be necessary. Digitization of *BAD Times* shows that partnerships in the early stages of a project will

help with promotion and use by others on campus.

Overall, the digitization of *BAD Times* was successful in accomplishing several goals. The department was able to test digitization of a full newspaper run in an abbreviated amount of time, while refining digitization procedures for future projects. The department was able to highlight a valuable resource for a popular research topic and increase awareness of diverse holdings through the press coverage received. The department was able to participate in Library and University wide goals by promoting diversity research and diversity within the collections while giving staff insight on how to promote future projects on campus. In addition, the project was able to bring to light hidden writings of a nationally renowned author. The *BAD Times* project served to make sure that a valuable resource is not only more widely available to patrons right now, but that its preservation is ensured and the resource will be available for generations to come.

## Notes

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