Digital Initiatives Bootcamp:
Launching digital projects at small institutions with limited resources

A presentation/workshop by Amy Bocko, Digital Initiatives Librarian, Emerson College
What to expect today?

- Background
- Building a foundation
- Planning for success
- Digital project snapshot
- Exercise
- Discussion
The Digital Initiatives Librarian:
Project manager, cheerleader and miracle worker
Building a foundation
Starting a digital program

**Challenges**

- Flat budgets, rising costs.
- Staffing constraints.
- Busy collaborators.
- Technology systems & infrastructure.

**Opportunities**

- Excitement for new area of library services.
- Patron base wants to be increasingly digital.
- Increased access & preservation of unique materials.
- Outreach opportunity to highlight distinct materials.
Laying the groundwork, pooling expertise

- *Create Steering Committee*
  - Colleagues library wide can represent the unique needs of their users.
- *Create a unified vision for your program*
  - Ensures institutional buy-in and that everyone’s voice is heard!
- *Work with experienced colleagues*
  - How can traditional library skillsets transfer to digital projects?
- *Set project priorities*
  - What projects can bolster awareness of your project and have the widest appeal?
- *Technology survey*
  - What technology/resources do you have available to you? Where will your money be best spent?
Creating buy-in across campus

● **Faculty buy-in**
  ○ Build relationships & partnerships across campus.
  ○ Solidifies importance of digital initiatives program.
  ○ Begets more potential collaborations.

● **Student buy-in**
  ○ Form relationships with student groups and student scholars.
  ○ Creating projects that will appeal to student demographics.
  ○ Ensure born-digital student materials are preserved for future generations.
Tools for Success

● Documentation, documentation, documentation!
  ○ Documents of Understanding/Project plans
  ○ Scanning/metadata guidelines

● Project management tools
  ○ Trello

● Communities of practice
  ○ Are there local library groups you can be a part of?
  ○ Listservs?

● Guidelines and standards
  ○ FADGI

● MA institutions only: Digital Commonwealth
Digital lab and publishing

- Computer workstation
- Scanner
- Photo editing software
- Digital storage
  - Google Drive
  - Dropbox
  - Amazon Cloud
  - On campus platforms (e.g. Box)
  - External hard-drives
- Publishing platform
  - Omeka.net
Planning for success
Launching a digital project

**Phase 1: Creating a Program**

- Discovery (Identify a collection, audience & vision)
- Analysis (Benefits, obstacles and sustainability)
- Assembly (Team, tools and technology)

**Phase 2: Production & Creating a workflow**

- Process & Documentation

**Phase 3: Post-mortem**

- Evaluation, Aftercare & Outreach
Emerson Homestead Collection

A digital project snapshot
Phase 1: Creating a Program

Discovery

- Solicited ideas from colleagues; Identified a high value, interesting collection → also helped that it was small and could be completely digitized!
- Wide appeal to target audiences for Archives (faculty, students, alum, College Relations)

Analysis

- Offered the opportunity to work with a new format and create diversity in our archival image collection.
- Prints of Glass Plate Negatives → not the best quality.
- “One-and-done” collection → 114 objects; easy to sustain, will not take up much storage space

Assembly

- Use pre-existing workflows & technology → Digital Archivist & Senior Cataloger, scanning workstation
- Publish via Shared Shelf platform to OA Shared Shelf Commons
Phase 2: Process and Documentation
Phase 2: Process and Documentation
Phase 3: Evaluation, Aftercare & Outreach

**Evaluation**

- Format was challenging; Metadata had to be retrieved from an outdated system and was incomplete.
- Colleagues rose to the challenge and adapted workflows → new techniques have been used in subsequent projects.

**Aftercare**

- Collection is fully digitized, cataloged and made available through Artstor Shared Shelf Open Access.
- Images reside on two cloud platforms, metadata is extractable through Shared Shelf.

**Outreach**

- Colleagues from Archives & Special Collections have used their traditional platforms and contacts to publicize collection.
Exercise: Plan a small-scale digital project at your institution!
Thank you!