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Where the Tools Are

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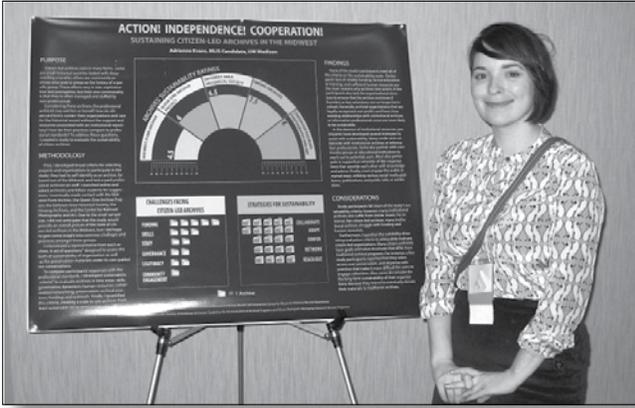
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Up-and-Comers: News for Student Archivists—Justin Seidler, Assistant Editor

Please submit Up-and-Comers items to Justin Seidler at justinseidler@gmail.com.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in the Student Poster Competition at the Annual Meeting!



Adrienne Evans of the University of Wisconsin–Madison took first place in the Student Poster Competition.

This edition of the *MAC Newsletter* Up-and-Comers column spotlights the Digital Media Projects Lab at Wayne State University's School of Library and Information Science. Digital resource labs lend themselves to the continued relevancy of modern archives and open doors to the greater information science community by providing invaluable support of, and collaboration with, its various organizations. In light of the exponential growth of the world of digital archives, the lab at Wayne State is a model not only of the technology required to make obsolete formats accessible to library and archives users, but as a training ground for the next generation of archives professionals as well.

Where the Tools Are

By Kim Schroeder, Wayne State University

The new Digital Media Projects Lab (DMPL, affectionately pronounced “dimple”) housed in the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) at Wayne State University (WSU) has had a busy first year! The lab was created to give students hands-on experience in migrating fragile analog formats. It supports both the Archival and Digital Content Management students and includes players for audio cassette tapes and reels, phonographic disk recordings, and videotape, and four flatbed scanners.

Since our school is located in the Cultural Center of Detroit, many institutions both within the university and outside are anxious to have some of their older formats converted. Over the last year, we have worked on

1. Digitizing the complete run of the *Detroit Sunday Journal* (the strike newspaper). Though a few had been scanned, we completed the rest of the run, created metadata records, and ran optical character recognition, readying it for implementation in the library's Fedora Commons installation. This fully searchable newspaper will be available to users in early summer.
2. Creating a DSpace archive of the school's history. Students research for resources on faculty biographies, curricula, events, and student life. The student volunteers are divided into three teams for scanning, metadata, and research. This project has allowed

students to become familiar with metadata design, system management, and scanning of various historical formats of text and imagery. Look for a public link to the project in the fall.

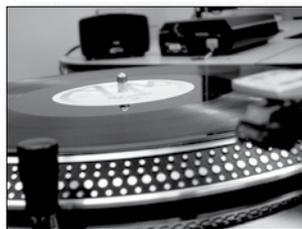
3. Converting a reel-to-reel audiotape of a speech Martin Luther King Jr. made in 1958, the most exciting project. The reel-to-reel tape was found at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (CHWMAAH). Initially, little was known about the recording. As they listened with chills to the booming voice coming out of the computer, students learned an excellent lesson about the importance of mining these old formats.
4. Converting six reel-to-reel tapes from the Folklore Archives at the Reuther Library. This valuable collection comprises interviews conducted on campus in the 1960s and 1970s, and covers a range of content from daily rituals to individual views on racism.
5. Migrating cassette tape oral histories of the Horace Sheffield and Dr. Charles Wright collections from the CHWMAAH.
6. Creating instructional podcasts for a class project aimed at educating librarians on new technologies.
7. Scanning 1950s and 1960s newsletters from the University Liggett School for the ongoing development of its archives.



SLIS student Edras Rodriguez-Torres uses the highly capable Epson 10000XL scanner. Photo by Mary Jane Murawka.

It is important to note that these projects involved more than 30 students from the SLIS program and even involved students online for metadata design and implementation. Laura Gentry, a new SLIS graduate, said that the DMPL allowed "...the ability to use a remote desktop using a proxy server. It is an unbelievable service for online distance students. I have used the lab extensively, even though I am hundreds of miles away. It also allows easy access for online distance students in different time zones around the world."

This summer the lab embarks on two new projects, one on web archiving and the other on digital forensics. Students will evaluate web archiving tools, utilize BitCurator to make disk images of a local museum's servers and other original



Phonographic record player used in the lab.

digital content, and create a digital preservation plan for the museum working with a mirror image of its server. This trust in SLIS students and the potential growth of their skills has been a phenomenal collaborative effort.

From an instructor's point of view, the DMPL is an invaluable resource for providing the hands-on experience needed to support classroom theory. For institutions, especially small ones with little hope of being able to purchase such expensive hardware and software, it opens doors on effectively closed formats. LaNesha DeBardelaben, director of Archives and Libraries at the CHWMAAH, has utilized the lab and SLIS students to help further the goals of the museum. DeBardelaben stated, "The WSU Digital Media Projects Lab has been a tremendous asset to our digitization work here at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. The library science



Kevin Barton, SLIS student, is pictured using the reel-to-reel equipment in the DIMPL. Photo by Mary Jane Murawka.

students who have worked on our collections using the Digital Media Projects Lab have made important historical resources more readily accessible to a broader audience through digitization. We are delighted to be able to utilize the top-notch resources and equipment in the lab through our partnership with the WSU Library Science School."

On the software end, the lab has a wide range of capabilities like advanced photo manipulation, audio editing, indexing, XML editing, and MARC tools, but we also want to do more in-depth training on typical content management tools used in archives. We have recently installed Archivists' Toolkit and ArchivesSpace but hope to add more content to make them more useful tools for class projects and demonstrations.

Kevin Barton, a SLIS student and lab tech, has received extensive professional exposure throughout the course of his work on project management, storage, and permissions issues, as well as the management of several content systems. He stated, "The Digital Media Projects lab has allowed us to integrate all of the disparate elements of digital archiving into a single environment: physical media, digitization hardware and software, and data management tools. This allows our students exposure to the full range of real world expectations and responsibilities through a seamless experience."

Wayne State hopes to see the DMPL continue to evolve as more students are educated in the tools and skills they must master in the twenty-first century. The lab is available for tours and tries to reach out to institutions that require assistance with digital preservation or migration. With only a year under their belts, DMPL staff feel good about the student experience and being able to help so many institutions.