

You Want Me to Do What Now? : Tackling the Digital Backlog through Reorganization, Collaboration, and Redefining Traditional Roles

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J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte holds thousands of high-quality, high-resolution digital images. The problem? They reside on an internal server, have no descriptive metadata attached to them, and are completely hidden from public view. Archivists and librarians at Atkins Library needed innovative, efficient solutions to effectively describe the digital objects and make them available to end users through search and discovery. This digital backlog coupled with tight budgets challenged library managers to think creatively to utilize existing library staff and maximize downtime while expanding staff members' current knowledge and professional experience.

This poster session will examine innovative redesigns of workflow and new collaborations within and beyond Special Collections to tackle the digital backlog. The five main topic areas will include:

- 1) redefining traditional Special Collections duties to include metadata creation;
- 2) library reorganization to dedicate cataloging staff to describing unique and rare materials;
- 3) interdepartmental collaborative workflows;
- 4) challenges (including authority control, quality control, and inter-indexer consistency);
- 5) evaluation of the project and plans for the future.

The unique training and workflow procedures created at Atkins Library can serve as a model for other libraries that seek to refocus and expand upon the professional efforts of existing staff while also providing comprehensive access to previously hidden rare and unique materials.

About the authors:

Katie McCormick is the Assistant University Librarian for Special Collections at UNC Charlotte's J. Murrey Atkins Library. In that capacity, Katie is responsible for building, preserving, and providing access to original and unique research materials. Through collection and collaboration, Special Collections connects communities and individuals, today and in years to come, to the documentary, photographic, and audio/visual history of the greater Charlotte region and of UNC Charlotte. Prior to being AUL for Special Collections, Katie was the Reference Archivist and Oral History Program Coordinator for UNC Charlotte's Special Collections Department. Previously she worked at the Irish Music Center Archive at Boston College's Burns Library. She has her MLIS from Simmons College and an MA in Irish Literature from Boston College.

Kristy Dixon is the Digital Programs Archivist at University of North Carolina Charlotte's Atkins Library. She is responsible for development and implementation of digital initiatives involving Special Collections materials and services including project and website management and electronic

records preservation. She has been at UNC Charlotte for one year; before that, she served as a Metadata Librarian at the Digital Library of Georgia at the University of Georgia. She received her MLIS from the University of Alabama in 2004.