

Before pledging to participate in the *Jump In* initiative earlier this year Emporia State University (ESU) had taken few steps to establish a plan for gaining intellectual control of born-digital content on electronic or physical media currently within the collection. After discussing the initiative, Assistant Archivist Shari Scribner and I embraced *Jump In* as the perfect opportunity to motivate us towards laying the groundwork for an electronic records program.

Among the 4,500 linear feet of material that makes up the ESU Special Collections and Archives, the vast majority of it is unprocessed. This fact complicated selecting a starting point and scope for the project, but we initially decided to focus on surveying the manuscript collections. I created a spreadsheet that included fields for collection, location, inventory#, media type, label info (anything written directly on the media), accompanying annotations (anything written on the case or an enclosed piece of paper), and extent/physical description. The Special Collections and Archives is fortunate to have a number of talented student assistants studying within a range of programs. Majera Johnson, currently a junior in the Information Resources Studies (IRS) program and future candidate for the School of Library and Information Management program, showed an interest in assisting with the survey to learn more about electronic records.

Majera started surveying the processed manuscript collections on January 18th and completed the task within a few weeks with only four pieces of physical media in the spreadsheet – two CDs and two DVDs. Considering there were still approximately three months until the end of the initiative, we decided to expand the project to include the last five years of University Records accruals (2008-2012). Within these records Majera identified an additional 247 pieces of physical media, including 79 3.5” floppy disks and 166 CDs. The majority of media had some information on the label and many had an accompanying annotation on the case or an enclosed piece of paper. Majera also noted if the media’s label was blank (unmarked) or if the label was illegible, scratched out or torn off (unlabeled). Combined with the media from the processed manuscript collections, the final count of physical media was 249 pieces: 79 floppy disks, 168 CDs and 2 DVDs. After calculating the total maximum amount of data stored on each type of media, we currently have an estimated 114.9 GB of data.

Since many of the materials surveyed were unprocessed, Majera mentioned that some pieces of media were difficult to detect. Often the media was located between papers in a folder

or was left to float loose in the box, so she had to be careful not to miss items. Reflecting on the experience Majera noted that the process was occasionally tedious and the amount of focus required was tiring at times, but she was grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the collections and electronic records.

The next step we are working on is to establish a clean computer with a write blocker installed to create disk images of the media and survey the types of file formats they possess. This will allow us to gain control of what types of electronic records we are dealing with and what migration steps will need to be taken to maintain their accessibility. We will also have the opportunity to run checksums and create preservation and access copies of the information. It is our plan to establish a digital archives within the next year or two that addresses the rise in born-digital records being created on campus every day. The intellectual control we have gained through this project will greatly help us ensure that the electronic records we currently have on physical media are addressed before we advance to actively collecting born-digital records on a regular basis.