Jump In 3/Third Time's the Charm
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Background

Prior to this project, born-digital media was described at a very minimal level and, for the most part, left in situ alongside analog records. There is no indication that there were attempts to copy born digital content off the media for preservation or further processing. Any processing and description was informed by the information located on media labels.

Motivation

The Jump In survey coincided and ran parallel to a broader physical survey of our manuscript collections. We chose to survey the manuscript collections for a numbers of reasons. First, the majority of our manuscript collections are discoverable via online finding aids and are, for the most part, better described than our institutional records. They also include many of our most heavily utilized collections. These collections comprise approximately 14% of our holdings, which we believed to be a reasonable number to survey within the Jump In 3 timeframe. Lastly, by conducting a survey of born-digital media in the manuscript collections first, Archives' staff would have a template for conducting a similar survey of the much larger institutional records in the future.

In addition to surveying the born-digital media, we decided that this would be a good opportunity to inventory all audio visual media located in these collections.

The Survey

The survey was started in December 2014 and concluded at the end of March 2015. Sarah Pinard, Processing Archivist in University Archives, surveyed the majority of manuscript collections and analyzed the results found in this report. Joseph Patton, a Graduate Assistant in University Archives, surveyed two collections toward the conclusion of the survey, and Matthew Oliver, a Graduate Intern, undertook out a survey of the born-digital media in a manuscript collection he was processing as part of a graduate internship. Both of the students gained hands on experience working with a variety of born-digital media.

The survey began with a search of our online database of finding aids using search terms such as "CD", "compact disc", "DVD", "flash drive, "hard drive", "disc", "disk", "floppy", "digital", "computer", and "electronic." The results of this initial search were compiled and entered in the University Archives' collections inventory spreadsheet, thereby notifying the person who was undertaking the physical collections survey that these collections also contained born-digital media.

The search of the finding aids led us to discover that descriptive terms for born-digital media were used inconsistently. Often this description was located in different places within the finding aid; sometimes born-digital media was noted in the container list, other times it was noted in the search terms. In

addition, variations in descriptive practice over the years meant that not all collections with born-digital media were described as such in the finding aids. The inconsistencies in description were noted and will be addressed as we move forward.

Archives staff expected that not all born-digital media would be noted in the finding aids and there are a small number of manuscript collections with only collection-level records. Therefore we anticipated that the remaining unidentified born-digital media (those not recognized in the finding aid database search) would be discovered during the broader physical collection survey. This required the surveyor to be mindful of more recent accessions, to keep an eye out for CD boxes and other unique containers that might house born-digital media, and generally be aware of born-digital media that might be housed next to paper files and audio visual media.

Once born-digital media was located the surveyor recorded the following information about each item in a born-digital inventory worksheet that contained these fields: collection number/name, location, type of physical medium, maximum capacity unit, title/label information, date(s), description of contents, condition of physical medium, required software (if known), miscellaneous notes.

Results

Of the 300 manuscript collections surveyed, 13 were identified as containing born-digital media. The formats identified were CDs, DVDs, 3 ½ inch floppy disks and 5 ¼-inch floppy disks.

Format	Number of items	Maximum storage capacity
CD	59	41.3 GB
DVD	43	208.4 GB
3 ½ inch floppy disk	10	14.4 MB
5 ¼ inch floppy disk	20	24 MB
Total	**132**	**250**

The CDs and DVDs ranged in date from 1999-2011, the 3.5" floppy disks were from the late 1990s, and the 5 ¼ inch floppy disks were the oldest of our born-digital media, ranging in date from 1977-1988.

Perhaps surprisingly, most of the born-digital media was well labelled, either directly on the media itself, on the container which held the media, and sometimes both.

Moving forward

The University Archives has the technical capacity to mount and read three out of the four formats identified in this survey (CD, DVD, 3.5" floppy disk), but will need to reach out to the University Libraries Information Technology department to locate assistance with the 5 ¼ inch floppy disks.

Looking forward, this survey provides a foundation for Archives staff when we begin the much larger survey of the institutional records. It also gives us tangible information that will inform decisions and policy making as the University Archives begins to build the framework and workflows for a basic digital archives preservation program.