LEVEL DOWN TO LEVEL UP

The Impact of Item-Level Description on Finding Aid Discoverability

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01

BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY
STEP 1
Create two versions of the same finding aid with one described at the file (box or folder) level and the other at the item-level.

STEP 2
Post both finding aids online at the same time and leave up for at least a year.

STEP 3
After time is up, pull analytics for each guide and assess which descriptive level was most frequently accessed.

Chose five total collections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>Utah Agricultural College football program</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>Utah Agricultural College football program</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 3</td>
<td>Utah Agricultural College football programs</td>
<td>1922-1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 4</td>
<td>Utah Agricultural College football programs</td>
<td>1922-1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 5</td>
<td>Utah Agricultural College football programs</td>
<td>1933-1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 6</td>
<td>Utah State Agricultural College football programs</td>
<td>1945-1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 7</td>
<td>Utah State Agricultural College football programs</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 8</td>
<td>Utah State Agricultural College football programs</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>Item 1: Utah Agricultural College versus University of Utah: 3 copies University of Utah Line-up: Summer, McIntyre, Naylor, Briggs, Petersen, Barker, Wartham, Sutherland, Hamilton, Gardner, Traverse Utah Agricultural College Line-up: Jones, Price, Griffin, Oswin, Snow, Glaus, Egbert, Laurenson, E. Brooks, H. Brosset, Peterson, Williams, Doolittle, Cohn, Perry, Free, Lewis, Hendrick, Mote, Officials: W. Hughes, Boon, D. A. Calahan</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 3</td>
<td>Item 1: Letter from Jack Croft organizing 1922 football team 50th reunion</td>
<td>1972 April 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 3</td>
<td>Item 2: Utah State University Football Team Roster: Adamson, H. Arby; Barker, Elwood; Bowman, William W.; Bollinbrooke, Bert; Church, Rudolph; Conroy, Maurice; Cooley, Walter; Croft, Jack; Evans, James; Gardner, Bert; Gardner, Dave; Harris, S. R.; Hendrick, C. D.; Jeffs, Armand; Kirk, Harvey; Knowles, Willard B.; Ledingham, Clarence; Lindsay, Claude; Maughn, Joseph; Nelson, George (Trainer); Peterson, Venal; Romney, E. L. (Coach); Schaeub, Wesley; Seighfried, Joshua; Stanger, A. G.; Whitney, Byron; Williams, Jack; Woodside, Howard; Wooley, Ray; Wrencher, John</td>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 4</td>
<td>Item 1: Utah Agricultural College versus Wyoming: Aggie Line-up: &quot;Rute&quot; Conway; &quot;Butch&quot; Knowles; &quot;Jack&quot; Croft; &quot;Bun&quot; Wooley; Ledingham; &quot;Wes&quot; Shuba; B. Gardner; Harvey Kirk; V. Petersen; &quot;Sid&quot; Harris; &quot;How&quot; Woodside; &quot;Jim&quot; Evans; &quot;Jack&quot; Williams; Church; &quot;Herb&quot; Bligham; &quot;Jack&quot; Seighfried; D. Gardner; D. Hendrick; &quot;Sprat&quot; Brownman; &quot;Finky&quot; Jeffs; Adelson; &quot;Sheeny&quot; Lindsay; Rencher; Baker; &quot;Joe&quot; Maughn; Whitney; Bollinbrooke; Stanger; Cooley; Wyoming Line-up: Hegewald; Ales, Dock; Hickeyman Johnstone; Gilbert; Thompson; Person; Hobbs; G. Smith; C. Smith; Blanchard; Madsen; Kling; Witterbrooke; Vandeweere; Corbett; Desmond; Coach Corbett; Manager Schlosser</td>
<td>1922 November 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun and the smallest one in the Solar System—it's only a bit larger than the Moon. The planet's name has nothing to do with the liquid metal, since Mercury was named after the Roman messenger god.
02

RESULTS & ANALYSIS
WHAT TYPE OF SEARCH TERMS ARE MOST COMMONLY USED BY PATRONS AND WHERE ARE THEY FOUND IN THE FINDING AID?
RQ1: WHAT TYPE OF SEARCH TERMS WERE MOST COMMONLY USED BY PATRONS AND WHERE ARE THEY FOUND IN THE FINDING AID?

- 77.86% of search terms were names
- 95% of all search terms were found in the Collections Inventory
- 76% of URLs with search terms matched only the <scopecontent> and <unittitle> tags
Research Question 2

Is there a measurable difference in discoverability and user interactions between finding aids described to the item-level and finding aids described to the box or folder level?
RQ2: IS THERE A MEASURABLE DIFFERENCE IN DISCOVERABILITY BETWEEN FINDING AIDS DESCRIBED TO THE ITEM-LEVEL AND FINDING AIDS DESCRIBED TO A BOX OR FOLDER LEVEL?

6,100%
Item-level descriptions were 61x more discoverable

98.39%
Of all pageviews occurred in item-level description finding aids

3,750%
Item-level finding aids were accessed on 37.5x more days than file-level finding aids
RESEARCH QUESTION 3

HOW DO SEARCH PARAMETERS IMPACT DISCOVERABILITY FOR FILE-LEVEL DESCRIPTION VS. ITEM-LEVEL DESCRIPTION?
RQ3: HOW DO SEARCH PARAMETERS IMPACT DISCOVERABILITY FOR FILE-LEVEL DESCRIPTION VS. ITEM-LEVEL DESCRIPTION?

Item-level finding aids averaged 1,020% more pageviews for instances where search parameters are known (database searches).

Item-level finding aids averaged 20,420% more pageviews for instances where search parameters are unknown (browser-driven traffic).

Of URLs with search terms matched the item-level finding aid, with only 5% matching the file-level finding aid.
03
TAKEAWAYS
MAJOR THEMES

NAMES
Are the most common searches

PAGEVIEWS
Are driven by the Collection Inventory

INVENTORY
Lack of robust Collection Inventory negatively impacts discoverability
WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

NAME
Use personal names wherever feasible

IDENTIFY
Existing collections that could improve with item-level description

COMBINE WORKFLOWS
Use the item-level metadata created during digitization to expand the Collection Inventories

INVESTIGATE
Conduct further research on whether updated guides increase pageviews and what kinds of collections are most impacted

Research project procedures: https://usulibrary.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/ULC/pages/1077706774/Discoverability+Research+Projects
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THANKS!