# Archival **Speed** Processing (ASP): Using Digital Images and Video as the Initial Step in Collection Description



In general, due to extreme under-resourcing, most archives have historically had a large, if not massive processing backlogs. In 2005, Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner invented the "More Product, Less Process" (MPLP) strategy for accelerating collection processing to address this issue. Since 2005, MPLP has been largely accepted, to varying degrees, by the American archival profession as a valid strategy for speeding up collection processing. However, the backlog problem remains.

For example, the AFL-CIO Records held in the George Meany Memorial Archive for Labor and Social Justice at the University of Maryland has a backlog of over 30,000 linear feet. At current rates of processing, it is estimated that it would take 315 years to process these records, even using a partial MPLP strategy. What can be done to solve this fundamental problem?

Archival Speed Processing (ASP) is an experimental strategy following in the tradition of the intent of MPLP. It is an attempt to explore the innovative possibilities of using smartphone imaging capabilities to create a new way to describe collections. Simply put, the idea is to take photographs and/or videos of boxes of unprocessed material for use in identifying their content. The image files would then be used to provide nearly instant initial access to box or folder level collection descriptions for researchers via email or Google Drive. Later, the images could be linked to collection management systems, like ASpace.

The initial results of experiments look promising. Creating images or videos of boxes of folders both took approximately 15 minutes. Doing an inventory which only recorded dates took 20 minutes. Actual entry of full folder titles would take much longer. This means that a processing timeframe for the Meany Archives could theoretically be reduced from 315 years to 3.5 years.

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**George Meany Memorial Archive for Labor and Social Justice**
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