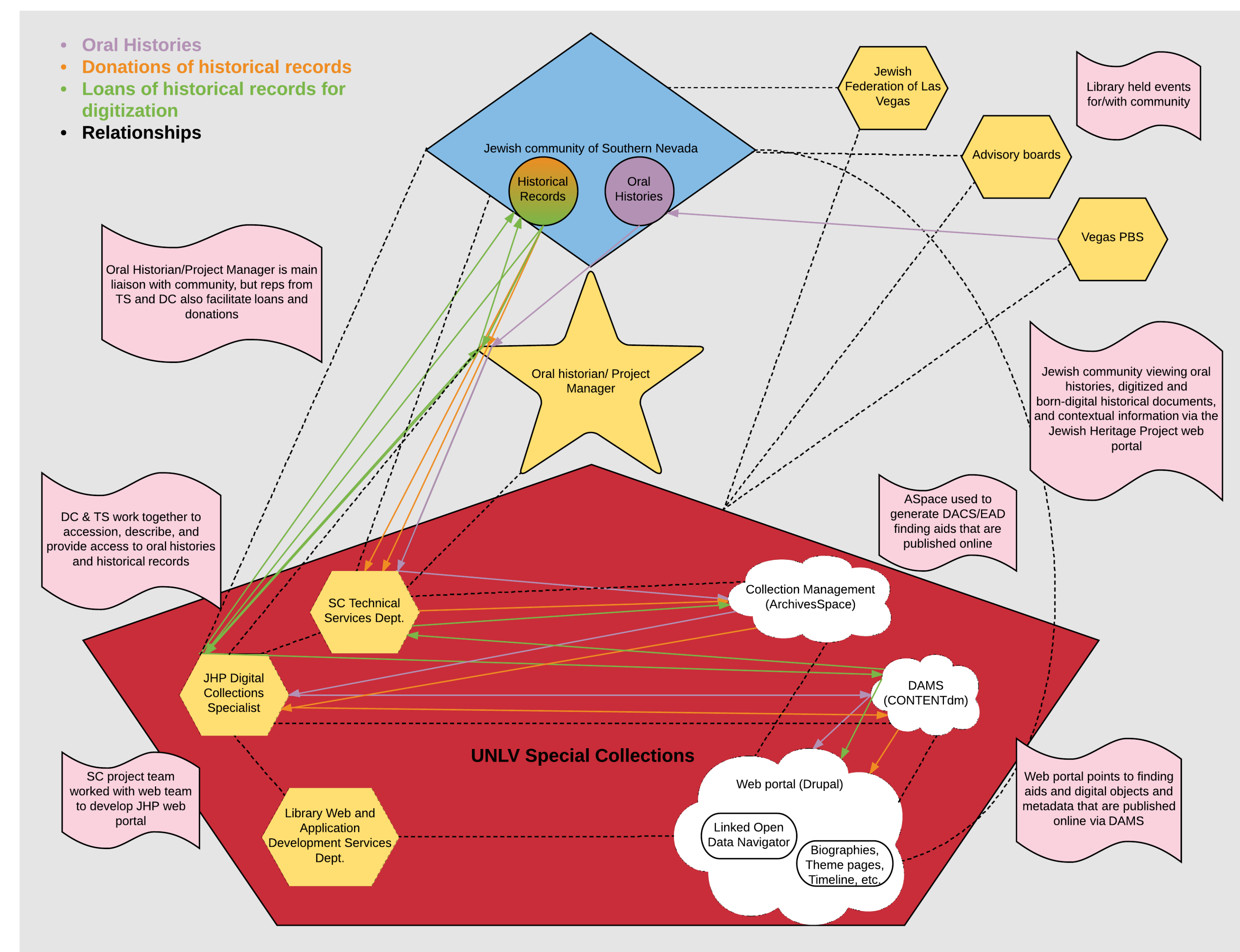


Juggling priorities: lessons learned during a community documentation project

How does a University Special Collections effectively implement a short term community engagement and documentation effort?



Conclusions

- Gauge community interest and enthusiasm prior to planning
- Identify and document desired outcomes, specific goals, and how to measure them
- Identify and secure resources (equipment, financial, staffing)
- Clearly define and document priorities, procedures, and staff roles in the beginning
- Document. Document. Document!
- Competing priorities: relationship-building vs. archival standards
- Plan community documentation projects in phases:
 - Survey materials already in repository
 - Identify gaps
 - Collect and process
 - Digitize and create metadata
 - Put online
- Don't do everything at once! ☺



"The Southern Nevada Jewish Heritage Project at the UNLV University Libraries is a multi-year initiative to collect, preserve, and provide access to primary sources documenting the history of the Jewish community of Southern Nevada. The project's goals are to conduct oral histories that capture first hand testimony about Jewish life in Las Vegas; to seek personal and organizational archives about the community and ensure their preservation; to provide online access to selected historical resources that support research, teaching, and learning; and to engage the Jewish and Las Vegas communities in appreciation of this rich history."

<http://digital.library.unlv.edu/jewishheritage>

Desired outcomes	Goals for year 1	Strategies	Challenges	End of year 1 (grant funded period)	End of year 3 (numbers include year 1)
Identification and preservation of historical resources in danger of loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect 25 oral histories• Collect archival materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisory Board to identify potential donors & interviewees• Community scanning days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existence of historical records• Responsiveness of donors/timing• Appraisal• Scan-and-return workflow• Inconsistent staffing and roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 58 oral histories collected• 19 archival collections (34.4 linear ft and 1,439 digital files)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 140 oral histories collected• 32 archival collections (176 linear ft and 618 GB)• 30 websites archived
Increased availability of original materials online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digitize 25 oral histories and videos• Digitize 500+ documents and photos• Investigate future Jewish newspaper digitization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outsource audio, video, newspaper digitization• Compound digital objects = less description needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectations of immediate online access• Diverse materials• Limited existing description• Inconsistent staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 322 total digital objects (est. 9,500 digital items)• 42 legacy oral histories digitized• 24 videos digitized, 4 online• Newspaper inventory created	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2,114 total digital objects (est. 22,826 digital items)• 123 oral histories online• 43 videos online• 1,017 issues of <i>Las Vegas Israelite</i> newspaper online
Community interest in the online portal	Build web portal with contextual info	Web portal = more attractive, user friendly, and context-rich front door to CONTENTdm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understaffed web dept.• Creating content for web portal was <u>very</u> time consuming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website not formally launched yet• 125 biographies, 6 theme essays, and 1 timeline• 700+ page views of project blog	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15,609 page views of web portal• 49,282 page views of digital objects (CDM)• 300 biographies, 9 theme essays
Community participation in helping the UNLV Libraries preserve this history	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote project & UNLV Libraries• Engage community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral history interviews• Loans & donations• Advisory Board• Promotion, events, & presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Busy schedules• Vague understanding of archives from donors?• Inconsistent staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 70+ oral history interviewees• 22 archival donors• 5 advisory board meetings, 50+ participants• 300+ people met with project staff• 4 presentations• 7 promotional videos• 1 magazine ad• Bookmarks & brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 163 oral history interviewees• 46 archival donors• 2 articles in <i>David Magazine</i>• 1 blog post by <i>Las Vegas Weekly</i>

Further Research

Measuring the value of community documentation projects:

- Do they result in more/more diverse collections?
- Do they result in more community support for the institution/profession?
- Do they result in more users/use of the archives?

Assessment:

- Surveys, interviews, focus groups
- Compile statistics on collecting, use, donations, supporters
- Compare within an institution, before and after
- Compare between institutions