

Silver Voices: Digitizing Oral Histories for Everyone

KEN FOX

In 2019 the Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded the Richard and Ronay Menschel Library at the George Eastman Museum a generous Museums for America grant to digitize and make freely available through its website four of the museum's most requested audiovisual archives. Two are oral histories of photography and cinema, and include interviews with such leading figures in photography as Lisette Model, Ansel Adams, and André Kertész, and classic Hollywood actors like Gloria Swanson, Lillian Gish, and Buster Keaton. The third is a series of video interviews with many the world's leading photographic conservators, who discuss and demonstrate their techniques. The fourth collection comprises audiotapes of landmark Eastman Museum symposia, workshops, and conferences, recorded over the course of nearly 40 years.

The primary goal of *Silver Voices: A Photography and Cinema Oral Histories Digitization Project* is to make these important resources available the widest possible audience, including the deaf and hard-of-hearing -- a user-community too often under-resourced by audiovisual archives. *Silver Voices* will also serve as an institutional pilot project. Once implemented, the project team's assessment of the outcomes and user feedback will help the museum better plan, manage, and preserve our extensive audiovisual archives.

In this presentation Project Director Ken Fox, Head of Library and Archives at the George Eastman Museum, will demonstrate how his team is leveraging ArchivesSpace to not only manage these audiovisual materials but present them to the public through the platform's public user interface. He will also discuss how the project harnesses the power of crowd-sourcing as an innovative and cost-effective way to provide transcriptions for the deaf and hard-of-hearing while offering users a more engaging and interactive experience.

About the author:

Ken Fox is the Head of Library and Archives at the Richard and Ronay Menschel Library at the George Eastman Museum in Rochester, New York. Formerly the associate editor of *The Motion Picture Guide* and a film reviewer for *TV Guide*, he is a graduate of the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation and holds a master's degree in media studies from the University of Rochester and a master's degree in Information Science from the State University of New York at Albany.