

Mix and Match: Exploring Processing Efficiencies for Born-Digital Materials

KARLA IRWIN and CYNDI SHEIN

Abstract:

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries Special Collections is exploring an efficient processing approach (à la MPLP) for born-digital materials, making an effort to balance the inherent fragility of bits and bytes with the reality that not all born-digital collections merit intensive processing. Irwin and Shein use a chart from “Guidelines for Efficient Processing in the University of California Libraries” (p. 15-16) to help define the levels of processing their department performs on analog materials, but they have found little guidance of that nature for born-digital materials. They’ve begun contemplating how to adapt this chart for the processing of born-digital materials and are presenting their ideas through a poster that can also be utilized as a dynamic, collaborative space to gather and record ideas from colleagues.

UNLV’s poster depicts a framework for describing levels of processing born-digital materials, from minimal to highly intensive. Descriptions of various born-digital processing actions (from ingest to creating access copies) are expressed on cards that can be sorted and moved about the framework to represent different perspectives on how best to define these levels of processing. Through this interactive poster, UNLV invites colleagues to mix and match born-digital processing actions with appropriate/corresponding levels of processing. In the context of responsibly stewarding born-digital materials using moderate resources, the goal of the poster is to move the profession closer to determining what actions should be required for every born-digital collection versus what actions might be reserved for/selectively performed on high-profile or high-risk collections.

About the Authors:

Karla Irwin is the Special Collections Technical Services Librarian at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries. She holds a Master of Library and Information Science from Drexel University with a focus in archival studies and has been at UNLV since May 2014. Karla previously held positions at the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware and Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She earned her Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) certification from SAA in 2017. Her research interests oral history collection management, exhibits, and strategies for improving born-digital collection policies, procedures, and workflows.

Cyndi Shein is the Head of Special Collections and Archives Technical Services at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries, where she leads efforts to ensure the preservation, discoverability, and accessibility of archival materials. She previously held positions at the Getty Institutional Archives; the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Libraries Special Collections and Archives; the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) Libraries; and the National Baseball Hall of Fame Museum Library and Archives. She earned a BA in English from Westmont College (Santa Barbara) and an MLIS from San José State University. She earned her Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) certification from SAA in 2013. Cyndi is an advisor on the OCLC Demystifying Born Digital Expert Advisory Group; a member

of the Archives Leadership Institute 2016 cohort; and a peer reviewer for the Journal of Western Archives.