

Archival Collections in an Object World

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Abstract: The Henry Ford has embarked upon a large digitization project including both the digital photography of 3D objects and the scanning of 2D archival material. As part of that project, the institution is beginning to transition from the boutique scanning of individual items to a more systematic digitization program. As this project moves forward, questions have surfaced centering on how the institution can manage and present mixed collections of archival material and 3D museum objects. These questions include: How can museum objects be presented alongside archival items with differing levels of description? How can archival items retain context in an object-centric system? What role do finding aids and other traditional archival descriptive tools play in this environment? How can the collection management system best be leveraged?

The Benson Ford Research Center (BFRC), which serves as the archives of The Henry Ford, is currently researching answers to these questions. This poster highlights the challenges of merging the differing data models of museums and archives, and outlines research results as we navigate methods to break down the walls separating the museum and archival worlds.

About the author:

Lance Stuchell holds a BA in History from Northwestern University (2006) and a Master of Science in Information from the University of Michigan's School of Information, with a specialization in Archives and Records Management (2009). He was Digital Preservation Projects Coordinator at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (2009-2010). Currently, Lance serves as the Digital Project Archivist at the Henry Ford's Benson Ford Research Center, where he is responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures governing the creation, access, description, and preservation of digital archival assets.