Guidelines for Describing Digital Materials in Finding Aids

Version 1.0
August 2, 2012

Introduction

Staff from the Michigan Historical Collections, University Archives and Records Program, and Digital Curation adopted the following conventions to standardize the description of digital materials in Bentley Historical Library finding aids. These guidelines are subject to periodic review and revision.

Title Page

- Inclusive dates: for digital materials, the date(s) should reflect the time period in which the intellectual content of the digital materials originated and was actively used (not the creation or last modified date for the digital files held by the library).
- Extent: when digital materials are present, the extent should be expressed as the content's volume, using the most appropriate unit (i.e. KB, MB, GB, TB, etc.). This volume will not include archived websites, since these typically will increase in size every year and would require the revision of a great many finding aids. Example:

    Extent: 3 linear feet and 3.8 GB

- Digital Material note: this note will be reserved to identify the location of removable storage media within the collection or record group. Example:

    Digital Material: CD-ROMs in Boxes 2 and 4; 3.5" floppy disks in Box 12.

Abstract

In providing an overview of the intellectual content and formats/genres found within a collection or record group, the abstract should specifically mention the presence of digital materials.

Digital Processing Note

A brief, standardized statement with a link to a more in-depth document will be included after the scope and content note.

Scope and Content Note

The scope and content notes for series should note when digital materials are present. As with paper or analog materials, the scope and content note for the series should give a clear and thorough overview of the intellectual content/subject matter of the digital materials. In addition, the scope and content note should include the following:

- A parenthetical reference to the volume of digital content for the individual series or subseries in an appropriate unit (KB, MB, GB, etc.).
- An overview of the "types" of digital content within the series (i.e. audio files, video files, still images, word processing documents, spreadsheets, etc.). Attention should be called to special

or unique file formats. While it is not necessary to list all the file extensions found within the series (.PDF, .DOCX, .JPG, etc.), archivists should use their discretion to determine if it is appropriate to mention the specific file formats for some materials (i.e., "the series includes 20 podcasts in .MP3 audio files").

- If appropriate, the number of files found in the series. In particular, reference should be made to the number of files within .ZIP files (i.e. "includes 3 .ZIP files that contain 12,320 files").
- A note if it was necessary to rearrange content in processing the digital materials.

Item List

Digital materials should be described in the finding aid at the level to which they are packaged. Thus, if individual files have been deposited as separate "Items" in Deep Blue, they should be described individually in the finding aid.

NOTE: If one or more directories have been packaged into a .ZIP file, the processor should include the major subdirectories within the .ZIP file to give patrons a better indication of the available materials. If directory names are nondescript or otherwise obscure, it may be necessary to provide a parenthetical note with additional information.

Specific features of the item list include:

- Location: In lieu of a Box Number (i.e. "Box 1"), use the term "Online" for digital materials.

- Date: As mentioned above, the "unit date" should reflect when the intellectual content of the digital material was originally created/actively used, not the creation or last modified date for the files held by the library.

- Digital deposit ID: the BHL digital deposit ID (the collection number followed by a consecutive 4 digital number; i.e. 2011012_0001) will be included as a note (shortcut keys: Alt-nn). Example:

    %nb(BHL deposit ID: 9979_0002)%ne

- <dao>: for content that is openly accessible via a web-based interface, the processor will include a link (the URL or, in the case of material in Deep Blue, the unique numerical portion of the Deep Blue handle) and employ the "daolink" style from the BHL finding aid templates. Examples:
    o Web-based interface: **http://webarchives.cdlib.org/site/sw1nk36n2t**
    o Deep Blue: **2027.42/92219** (Derived from the URL: http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/92219)

- Restrictions: Access restrictions should be noted at the lowest level at which the applicable digital material is described (i.e. series, folder, item, etc.). The processor should enclose the restriction statement in brackets, and then use the appropriate 'restricted' style from the BHL finding aid templates (using a **bold** font style) . In addition to standard UARP restrictions applied to executive, personnel, and student materials and those related to HIPAA or attorney client

privilege, the library will note when digital materials are accessible only via the reading room: **[Restricted: reading room access only]**

- It is not necessary to include notes or parenthetical references to volume/number of digital files or specific information on file formats/extensions in the item list.

- Order of elements:
    1. Unit title
    2. Unit date
    3. BHL deposit ID
    4. Restriction or dao link

- Examples:
    - Open content in Deep Blue; individual files:

Women's History in Michigan Science and Engineering Oral History Project
Online
  Audio recordings
   Ajzenberg-Selove, Fay, 2007 (BHL deposit ID 032_0001) **2027.42/83521**
   Buckley, Paulita, 2007 (BHL deposit ID 032_0001) **2027.42/83518**
   Carter, Barbara, 2007 (BHL deposit ID 032_0001)**2027.42/83528**
   Connable,Tenho, 2007 (BHL deposit ID 032_0001)**2027.42/83524**

    - Open content in Deep Blue; multiple directories in a .ZIP file:

Digital Materials
Online
  Ann Arbor Projects, 2006 (BHL deposit ID 2011178_0001) **2027.42/89903**
   Fuller Road Exhibits
   Great Street Toolkit
   Mallets Creek and Brown Park RFP

    - Restricted content:

Allen Lichter, Dean 1998-2006
Online
  Email Correspondence, 1998-2006 (BHL deposit ID 87253_0002) **[ER Restricted until January 1, 2028]**