The Management of Digital Local History Collections:

An Annotated Bibliography

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Introduction and Scope

The following bibliography covers the management of the digitization of local history collections. Articles look at how small public libraries as well as large national libraries are using digitization as a way to preserve, acquire and disseminate local history collections. Articles also show the multiple terms used to cover this topic including “local history,” “local studies,” “local heritage,” and “digital archives.” This bibliography was limited to twelve of the most relevant articles, making this a somewhat limited look at this topic. Most of the articles were published in a date range from 2006-2010. The one exception was an article published in 1994. While this bibliography focuses mainly on the most current articles, the 1994 article is needed to show the first steps towards digitization.

Description of Topic

Digital local history collections include the collection of resources related to the local history of a community. This often includes the process of preserving resources on the indigenous knowledge of a community. Associated with digital local history collections are institutional repository which is used interchangeable with digital libraries, and their role in allowing the creation of digitized local history collections (Toong Tjiek, 2006). Throughout this paper I use “local history,” “local studies,” and “local heritage” as interchangeable terms.

Literature Review

Most of the research done on digital local history or local studies collections has been recently published within the last six years. The greater pull towards the internet and methods of digitization have led all aspects of libraries towards digitization of resources including local
studies collections. The research done has taken place both nationally in the United States and internationally, including the UK, Africa, Australia, and Indonesia.

While there is research on individual case studies on digital local history collections management among libraries and their importance among communities, there is still very little research and testing on how effective the digitization of the collections are. Quality control and proper testing is still needed for greater confidence in these systems (Seadle, 2009).

Martin and Heath (1994) first brought to attention the need for public libraries with local heritage collections, such as the ones at Ryde Library and Information Services, to have automated bibliographic descriptions of all resources with the collection. While the goal at this time was not to manage entire collections digitally online, the first step had been created. Now over the past fifteen years more and more resources have been digitized and placed online. While many of the articles mentioned in this bibliography show an increasing use of digitized local studies collections, Reid and Macafee (2007) show in their research that some libraries are still managing their local history collections with card catalogs. Their research also highlights that with more and more information available on the internet, there is a lack of quality control on what is published about local history and libraries can do their part in providing quality information on this subject.

Management of local history collections includes digital archives as well as websites that have been created for public access to the information. One article points out how not all digital archives are made for access to the public. Caplan (2010) explains the long-term preservation repository that is used at the University of Florida and how this “dark archive” had been made for the sole purpose of preservation as opposed to public access. This is in contrast to the rest of the research that highlights the digitizing of local studies collections to allow for greater access
to the public. In California, the California Local History Digital Resources project is “utilized to preserve and promote public access to digitized local history collections” (Turner, 2007). This digital archive project allows libraries and other institutions the ability to digitize their local studies collections and make them available not only to their local communities but the broader public as well.

The research also covered websites that have been created to allow access to local history resources. Barry and Tedd (2008) conducted a study on Ireland public libraries which highlights the best websites that present local study collections. This study focuses on how carefully done websites can be beneficial to local studies collections. As well, Yeates (2006) discusses local heritage that is being placed via the internet in South East of England. This is a much larger scale website and involves the collaboration of libraries and museums as opposed to the websites in the Barry and Tedd (2008) research which are much smaller websites run from individual public libraries.

The research shows that digital local history collections projects are conducted on large scale national levels and among smaller local libraries. McCook (2004) explains how with the help of some outside resources smaller libraries have to ability to create “astonishingly significant digital collections.” The South Oregon Digital Archives at Harmon Library has collections on the indigenous people of southwestern Oregon and northwestern California. These collections are managed and made available to the local community by this smaller sized library. Research conducted by Crook (2009) shows digital archiving on a national level. The National Library of Australia is the leading and largest institution in Australia for the preservation and digitizing of resources. It explains how its repositories, such as PANDORA Archive is used as
the main resource to access digital resources of all kinds including those of Australian culture significance.

The reason for creating these digital local history collections is also highlighted in the research. Much of the research expresses the need to have digital local history collections as it not only preserves local resources but it also allows the local community to access them. In some cases digitizing local resources is the only way it lasts. Toong Tjiek (2006) looks at how volcanic activity often causes great damage to local communities and any documentation of its heritage. By creating a digital collection this heritage can be protected.

The main goal of many local collections is the dissemination of the local indigenous knowledge. Digitizing collections allows communities to learn about their own cultural, such as the Aboriginal people of Australia. By creating a digital collection the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies can retain indigenous cultures and provide knowledge for indigenous people on indigenous people (Stroud, 2009). This is also shown in the research on public libraries in Africa where digital local studies collections are used not only to bridge the digital divide, but to involve the community in providing content in these collections, so they may preserve their heritage for the future (Greyling, 2010).

There is a lot to be studied and tested on the effectiveness of digital collections of local history resources. New technologies that become available can make doing this even easier and more cost effective, but time will only tell. The need for these collections and their impact is documented well, with plenty of case studies that explain their collections, importance of their collections and how their work in digital archiving is done. This information is useful and important to anyone who wishes to access this information for their library or personal research.
Bibliography

Entry 1:


**Abstract:** This paper aims to investigate how public libraries in Ireland are using their websites to present local studies collections online. All the websites of public libraries in Ireland were evaluated against a checklist of 50 criteria by one of the authors. An analytic description was provided of the four highest-ranking websites and semi-structured interviews were held with staff in these library authorities. (Excerpt from published abstract.)

**Annotation:** This article looks at public libraries in Ireland and how they are making local studies collections available online based on research for a masters dissertation. Websites are evaluated and three are discussed in detail. This article is important as it gives a different term to what I had been calling local heritage collections, the term local studies. This article highlights the large number of local studies sources available and the need for quality control along with the analysis of interviews from local studies librarians.

**Search Strategy:** This article was found when doing my initial search in the Social SciSearch database. Due to the large amount of articles in the Social SciSearch database on information science I thought that this would be a good place to start. This was my first search so I used keywords that related to my topic.

**Database:** Social SciSearch (Dialog File 7)

**Method of Searching:** keyword searching

**Search String:**

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>S3</td>
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<td>28</td>
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Entry 2:


**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to explore the effectiveness of large-scale consortia for disseminating local heritage via web and to describe the creation of a large geographically based cultural heritage consortium in the South East of England and management lessons resulting from a major web site digitisation project. The purpose is also to encourage the improved sharing of experience amongst similar projects in the future. (Excerpt from published abstract.)
Annotation: Both authors with experience in the UK and in the field of information science, discuss the management of a large scale digitization project. It offers a study on how collaborations can be created, managed and used to allow the public to access information on their local heritage. This study is an example of collaboration between local government libraries, archives and museums to share local heritage materials in Southeast of England.

Search Strategy: This was my initial search so I started in the Social SciSearch database. This database has a large amount of records on information and library science and therefore I thought it would be a good place to start. Since I had nothing to work from, expect my topic, I decided to use keywords for this search.

Database: Social SciSearch (Dialog File 7)

Method of Searching: keyword searching

Search String: S3 6 LOCAL()STUD?()COLLECT?  S4 10 HERITAGE()COLLECTION?  S5 8614 ARCHIV?  S7 8628 S3 OR S4 OR S5  S9 28 S7 AND PUBLIC()LIBRAR?

Entry 3:

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to discuss the current state of web archiving in Australia, and how libraries are adapting their services in recognition of the expanding role that online material plays in their collections. (Excerpt from published abstract.)

Annotation: This article looks at three archiving methodologies and their successes in digitizing archives at the National Library of Australia. The PANDORA Archive, the oldest repository, PANDAS and Archive-It are reviewed on their usefulness and what they archive. Edgar Cook has worked at the National Library of Australia and on PANDORA, giving him authority on its effectiveness.

Search Strategy: On another search in Social SciSearch, chosen as it seemed the be the best for my subject, I used a keyword search. This seemed the most appropriate as my search was still in its beginnings stages.

Database: Social SciSearch (Dialog 7)

Method of Searching: keyword searching

Search String: S1 19 local()history()collect?  S2 73 archives()manage?
Entry 4:

**Abstract:** The goal of this column is not to argue the pros and cons of digital archiving, or to propose solutions to its problems, but to describe it as a research subject and social phenomenon. (Excerpt from published abstract.)

**Annotation:** This article takes an anthropological look at digital archiving. Michael Seadle with his over 30 years experience in working with librarians, archivists, as well as education in digital archiving, offers an authoritative research on the need for more testing in the digital archiving systems that are needed in long-term preserving of archival material.

**Search Strategy:** Once again I used Social SciSearch for its vast availability of articles on information science. From the Crook article I received the term “digital archive” and therefore used this in a new keyword search.

**Database:** Social SciSearch (Dialog 7)

**Method of Searching:** keyword searching

**Search String:** S3 digital()archive?

Entry 5:

**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to discuss the issues surrounding the development at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) of a national digital knowledge center and indigenous portal for bringing culture back home and beyond. (Excerpt from published abstract.)

**Annotation:** This article shows an example of how digital archiving is being used to retain indigenous culture. It highlights the methods it which the collections are digital preserved as well as the importance of the collections to the local communities. This paper uses the AIASIS digital library as an example of what can be done at other libraries and their local studies collections. Rod Stroud has recent experience as director of the AIASIS Library and has worked in the information science field since 1975 concentrating of family history and online services.

**Search Strategy:** I refined my pervious search in Social SciSearch. This time I included the term library with the intention of finding more articles that strictly dealt with digital local histories managed from within a library system. This was also a keyword search.

**Database:** Social SciSearch (Dialog 7)
Method of Searching: keyword searching

Search String: S3 100 digital()archive?
S4 54 S3 and librar?

Entry 6:

Abstract: This article looks at the Bioregion and First Nations digital archive collections of the Southern Oregon Digital Archives at Harmon Library. These collections provide information on the regional ecology and indigenous peoples of southwestern Oregon and northwestern California. This looks at the significance of these collections and their creation from a smaller library.

Annotation: Dr. Cook, as a distinguished professor of library and information science, brings extensive knowledge of the field in this case study approach to what is capable of being completed in digital local studies collections. This article is important as it highlights that smaller libraries, such as Harmon Library in Oregon, have the ability to create impressive and extensive digital collections, through collaborations and outside support.

Search Strategy: This article was one of a couple articles found when searching in Social SciSearch. I had redefined my search to include the term “library.” I used a keyword approach as it had proved successful in my previous searches.

Database: Social SciSearch (Dialog 7)

Method of Searching: keyword searching

Search String: S3 100 digital()archive?
S4 54 S3 and librar?

Entry 7:

Abstract: This paper aims to describe the Florida Digital Archive (FDA), a long-term preservation repository for the use of the public university system of Florida, and the DSITSS preservation repository application used by the FDA. It seeks to explain requirements that shaped DAITSS design, outline functions of the current software, and describe how DAITSS is being rearchitected as a series of Web Services (DAITSS 2). It also endeavours to place the FDA and DAITSS in the context of various methods for implementing digital preservation functions. (Excerpt from published abstract.)
Annotation: The article takes a case study approach in archives management. It is unique in that it is a “dark archive.” This article is important in looking at systems of management that are used for the preservation of resources and how it functions. However, the inability for public access to these records proves counterintuitive to the easy access and widespread dissemination to digital archives and local history that is the goal of other research. As Assistant Director for Digital Library Services, Priscilla Caplan is an authoritative voice on functions and preservation capabilities of the DSITSS.

Search Strategy: To find better access to the full-text of articles I decided to search in the Library Literature & Information Science Full-Text database. This database has more direct links to full texts, proving useful. This was my first search in the database so I decided on a keyword approach.

Database: Library Literature & Information Science Full-Text

Method of Searching: keyword searching

Search String: “digital archives and libraries”

Entry 8:

Abstract: Africa and African libraries and information centers are poorly equipped to make a meaningful contribution to the current global digital knowledge economy. A library with content of local relevance will encourage communities to make use of library services, especially if they are empowered to participate in development of the content. Public libraries serving ethnic communities whose histories are locked up in written, pictorial and oral traditions are well positioned to provide a platform for collecting and disseminating of indigenous knowledge in the communities they serve. (Excerpt from published abstract.)

Annotation: This article is unique as it shows the creation of local study collections within public libraries in collaboration with the local community members themselves. The creation of digital archives is used not only as a preservation method but as a way of bridging the digital divide among communities that lack such technology. Elisabeth Greyling is a Senior Systems Librarian in South Africa and has 18 years experience in academic and public libraries and offers a unique experience of why creation and management of digital local history collections can have many important needs. This is also a very recent article on a consistently updating topic.

Search Strategy: From my previous search in the Library Literature & Information Science Full-Text database I chose to refine my search to the subject of “digital archives” and browsed the featured, peer-reviewed articles. This helped me to come across a couple of useful articles including this one.

Database: Library Literature & Information Science Full-Text
Method of Searching: browsing

Search String: “digital archives AND feature articles AND Limited: peer-review”

Entry 9:

Abstract: This paper talks about Desa Informasi (Information Village), an initiative to document local information resources at Petra Christian University through the implementation of an institutional repository (IR) system. The author argues that IRs have potential and an important role in the effort to preserve and disseminate indigenous knowledge. The author also describes the relationship between institutional repositories and digital libraries, that both are interchangeable terms. The paper also describes the impacts of the project to the campus community and the society, and how projects such as Desa Informasi are important especially for developing countries. (Published abstract.)

Annotation: The author takes on a case study approach to highlight the use of digital libraries and collections in the preservation and spreading of indigenous knowledge. This article uses the terms digital library and institutional repository as interchangeable terms, not previously done in other articles. As well, Desa Informasi focuses on the importance of small thematic collections instead of large generalizations on local culture.

Search Strategy: From a previous search in the Library Literature & Information Science Full-Text database I chose to refine my search to the subject of “digital archives” and browsed the featured peer-reviewed articles. This helped me to come across a couple of useful articles including this one.

Database: Library Literature & Information Science Full-Text

Method of Searching: browsing

Search String: “digital archives AND feature articles AND Limited: peer-review”

Entry 10:

Abstract: This article highlights the LSTA-grant funded California Local History Digital Resources Project (LHDRP) as a case study of a collaborative statewide program involving three primary groups: cultural heritage institutions, grant funding agencies, and digital library service providers. It explores how the infrastructure of the California Digital Library (CDL) is utilized to preserve and promote public access to digitized local history collections, and discuss challenges
and technical solutions to integrating heterogeneous resources into METS-based repositories.
(Excerpt from published abstract.)

**Annotation:** The article looks at a large state wide digital local history project. As educated in library science and the project manager of the California Digital Library, Adrian Turner provides great insight into the work the CDL is doing in creating digital local history collections. This article is important in explaining how a state wide project can be created, funded and managed to create a program that enables multiple institutions the ability to digitize their collections and allow the general public and local communities the ability to access the information.

**Search Strategy:** In an attempt to try a new database to find a different article I decided to go with the ERIC database. While this database is most strong for the field of education it offers a lot of resources for information science. By searching the database’s thesaurus I found a controlled searching approach most useful in finding an article on my topic.

**Database:** ERIC

**Method of Searching:** controlled vocabulary

**Search String:** Thesaurus descriptors: “Library Services” and “Local History”

**Entry 11:**

**Abstract:** The authors examine strategic priorities for local studies libraries in the context of the interactive Web. They examine the implications for access, investigations and the needs of different users. The philosophy that has previously guided local studies is articulated as a number of maxims, taking into account also social inclusion and lifelong learning. These maxims are then re-assessed and added to in the light of issues such as the acquisition of digital media objects, mass amateurisation, profiling remote users and balancing their needs with those of local taxpayers, digital service provision and creating and maintaining an effective online presence. (Published abstract.)

**Annotation:** While other articles have talked about the widespread use of digitization this article points to the local studies collections that are not widely known to their communities or how card catalogs are still used for local study collections even though their libraries are using online cataloging systems. Authors also point to an important need for quality control of local history that is published on the internet. Dr. Reid has done extensive research in local studies librarianship and historical bibliography. His book *The Digital Age and Local Studies* is an important resource in how the internet has affected local studies.

**Search Strategy:** LISTA has a great deal of resources on information science, which made it useful in finding an article on my topic. In an attempt to find new articles I decided that choosing
another database that had a lot of resources on library science would be useful. I decided a keyword approach on terms that I had found useful in previous searches.

**Database:** Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA)

**Method of Searching:** keyword searching

**Search String:** “local history collections and libraries”

**Entry 12:**

**Abstract:** Local studies collections in public libraries are identified as a significant part of the Distributed National Collection of Australia’s documentary heritage. Intellectual access to the full variety of formats included in these collections is generally inadequate. Most of these collections are not represented on national databases. A proliferation of inhouse and standalone approaches to the automation of bibliographic description of formats such as photographs, maps and newspaper indexing present obstacles to their inclusion on such databases. This article describes how Ryde Library and Information Services has taken advantage of a hardware and software upgrade of its library management system to automate the description of all formats in its local studies collection using international standards to create shareable records. In this process collection management goals have been identified and measures taken to enable their achievement. (Published abstract.)

**Annotation:** This is a unique article as it states the need for an automation of local studies collections. The term digital is not used as digital archiving was not yet the issue in 1994. Rather the research points out a need for bibliographic control of such collections based on national standards. Ryde Library and Information Science is used as the example in this article of why such work needs to be completed and its relevance to other public libraries. Both authors of this article have worked extensively at Ryde Library and have backgrounds in local studies, giving them vast knowledge of the need for automation of local studies collections.

**Search Strategy:** From my previous search in LISTA I added additional terms to my keyword search. I added the term “digital archives.” This term had been useful in other searches in different databases and thought it would be here as well.

**Database:** Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA)

**Method of Searching:** keyword

**Search String:** “digital archives and local studies and libraries”
Conclusion and Personal Statement

By completing this annotated bibliography I learned more than just about the management of digital local history collections. While the many case studies and research on digital archives and local studies was interesting, and I learned a great deal, what I learned about the research process was also great. I found early on that topics tend to shift from what you initially thought you were going to do research on, as mine did. While my research was originally on local heritage collections in libraries I found that this topic had multiple terms and that most research was on the digitization of them. Thus my topic became about this.

This research process also taught me how much time it can take to research. I am new at this style of researching and found that finding the articles that I wanted to took a lot of time. Putting the annotated bibliography together also took at lot of time, more than I expected. I found that the process was often slow and sometimes tedious. I find that annotated bibliographies can be a great resource to access, especially for a quick read on a resource and its usefulness on a certain topic.

In general I also found that I learned a lot on the mass amount of information there is out there on the topic of library and information sciences. The amount of research done on libraries and all of the services they have to offer is extensive. However, I feel that I shouldn’t be surprised, why would a bunch of information junkies not want to gain more information?

I certify that:

- This assignment is entirely my own work.
- I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or a website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.
- I have not submitted this assignment to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature Jennifer Bauserman
Date 12/8/2010