

Strategic Planning and Collaborative Effort to Preserve the University's History

Cindy Li

Colgate University

U.S.A



“Strategic planning is essential to all organizations. Without strategic plans, organizations lose their direction and purpose. Organizations are required to develop sustainable and valuable vision and mission statements, core values and objectives to reflect their strategic relevance and intent”

- Murungi

Background Introduction

- 1963 – Establishment of Sacred Heart University
- Commute Catholic School
- One building
- Student Body – Fewer than 200

Background Introduction

- 1980s – Great Expansion
 - 10 Residential Buildings
 - 5 Colleges
 - Wireless Campus
- 2nd largest Catholic university in New England
- Student Body – more than 6000

Background Introduction

- The important/significant moments captured by photos
- Not often known to the university community
- Rarely used
- Deteriorating due to unfavorable environment
- Data is in jeopardy

Background Introduction

- Office of University Advancement seeking for archival
- University Librarian believed
 - An opportunity to implement and practice its digital strategy
 - The preservation effort would become the legacy passed onto the future generation
 - Library had capability of digitizing, implementing and delivering the information

Initial Experiment

- Spring, 2008 - Received 1st box of about 1000 photos
- Photo Examination Result:
 - Organized in a random way
 - In usable condition
 - Colors started to fade
 - Black-White became yellowish
 - Sketchy information described the photos
 - Difficult to discern the best practices

Initial Experiment

- Set up initial digitization guideline
 - File format: Tiff & JPEG
 - Digitization station: a dedicated Dell PC with Adobe Creative Suite installed
 - Scanned Color: B & W – grayscale; color: 24-bit
 - Metadata: any available information recorded in an Excel file; file name convention indicated difference as well
 - Storage: a dedicated external hard drive
 - Labeling: Box number, envelope number and set number

Initial Experiment

- Instruction from Office of University Advancement: Digitized photos not edited with software
- First set of 20 scanned photos got positive feedback
- The digitization continued
- UL's vision:
 - digital contents should be made available to users
 - Benefit larger audience
 - Exploring digital platform: DSpace

Period of Dormancy

- The sluggishness of the project
 - The library stopped receiving photos
 - One way communication or no communication
- Possible reasons:
 - UL resign
 - OUA coordinator left the institution
 - Not much communication recorded
- Influence from European DL Development
- Consent from VP of OUA and interim UL

Collaborative Efforts

- 2012, an important year for the project
 - University's preparation for the 50th year anniversary
 - Possible funding opportunity
 - Head of DL at the library got promotion
 - No direct impact
 - Increase capacity of communication
- Improved technology plus accumulated experience of digitization
 - Modify the digitization guideline
 - Train student employee to scan

Collaborative Efforts

- Difficulties of implementing metadata
 - Library brainstorm
 - Alumni Relations Involvement
 - Engage Alumni's contribution
 - Yahoo Flickr API
- Acquire preservation platform
- Review DSpace
- Host solution with Shared Shelf

What's Next?

- The project got into full swing
- Lessons learned
- Time to review strategic plan
 - Short term: reach an observable end result measured by the execution of one or more objectives within the specified timeframe
 - Objectives: quality control of digitization, metadata implementation and data management.
 - Long-term goal: make better decisions by analyzing the outcome of the short-term plan
 - Objective: examine the methodology of the project management through UX

What's Next?

- The project showed promising future but concerns remained
- Sustainability
 - Technology
 - Past lesson could repeat and the digital contents could be obsolete
 - Personnel
 - Major change of leadership crippled the project
 - Such mobility is still happening

Conclusion

- The prolonged project is a pioneer for Sacred Heart University
- The passions waxed and waned
- Strategic planning required
- Necessity of effective collaboration and communication evidenced
- Sustainability weighed in

Question?