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Analog to Digital Preservation of the “Women Trailblazers in the Law” Oral History Project


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Analog to Digital Preservation of the “Women Trailblazers in the Law” Oral History Project

Presenter 1 Title

Digital Projects and Continuing Resources Librarian

Presenter 2 Title

Special Collections Librarian

Session Type

45-minute concurrent session

Abstract

In November 2018, Stanford Law School Library unveiled to the public an online exhibit of more than 100 oral histories of American women lawyers, scholars, judges, and government officials who helped diversify the legal profession in the late twentieth century. Called the “Women Trailblazers in the Law” Oral History Project, it is a collaboration between Stanford Law School Library and the American Bar Association. Our presentation discusses the details of the analog to digital preservation process, whereby the physical collection was converted into digital formats suitable for long term archival storage as well as online access for the general public. Join us to learn how we formulated our game plan, searched for and selected vendors for digitization, web sites, and digital repositories, and took steps to maintain both the physical and digital collections for future generations.

Location

KIPJ

Keywords

Analog to Digital Preservation, Archival Digital Storage Solutions, Audio Recordings, Digital Repositories, Digitization, Law -- History, Oral History, Women's and Gender Studies

DIGITAL INITIATIVES SYMPOSIUM 2019

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

April 29-30, 2019

Camelia Naranch

Carol Wilson

Stanford Law School – Robert Crown Library

1. Proposed session title:

Analog to Digital Preservation of the “Women Trailblazers in the Law” Oral History Project

2. The type of session we are interested in:

45-minute concurrent session

3. Abstract (maximum 150 words):

In November 2018, Stanford Law School Library unveiled to the public an online exhibit of more than 100 oral histories of American women lawyers, scholars, judges, and government officials who helped diversify the legal profession in the late twentieth century. Called the “Women Trailblazers in the Law” Oral History Project, it is a collaboration between Stanford Law School Library and the American Bar Association. Our presentation discusses the details of the analog to digital preservation process, whereby the physical collection was converted into digital formats suitable for long term archival storage as well as online access for the general public. Join us to learn how we formulated our game plan, searched for and selected vendors for digitization, web sites, and digital repositories, and took steps to maintain both the physical and digital collections for future generations.

4. A longer description of the session (maximum 500 words):

In November 2018, Stanford Law School Library unveiled to the public an online exhibit of more than 100 oral histories of American women lawyers, scholars, judges, and government officials who helped diversify the legal profession in the late twentieth century. Called the “Women Trailblazers in the Law” Oral History Project, it is a collaboration between Stanford Law School Library and the American Bar Association. Our presentation offers an in-depth examination of the analog to digital preservation process needed to convert the original taped interviews and supporting materials into usable digital content. We will discuss the steps

involved in this process and provide practical guidance on best practices for such digitization initiatives in the future.

The “Women Trailblazers in the Law” project began in Washington, DC in 2004. Under the leadership of American Bar Association members Linda Ferren and Brooksley Born, the ABA began conducting a series of extended taped interviews with women who had entered the American legal profession in the 1960s and 70s. The goal was to “record, preserve, and make publicly available the oral histories of outstanding senior women leaders in the legal profession.” While the interviews were largely completed by 2014, they remained in analog formats, with only edited transcripts available online for public access.

Beginning in 2016, a team of librarians at Stanford Law School began working with the ABA to digitize the oral history collection in its entirety. We set out to house the collection in library archives, digitize the audio recordings, videos, and paper transcripts, and archive the collection in a secure digital repository. We also agreed to design and maintain a website where the oral histories could easily be accessed by students, researchers, and members of the general public.

Our session will provide a step-by-step accounting of how to plan for and complete the analog to digital preservation process. We will describe how we went about inventorying, rearranging, and rehousing the physical materials received from the ABA. Next, we will discuss the negotiations undertaken with outside vendors for completing the digitization process of over 400 cassette tapes in various formats and quality levels in accordance with NARA guidelines. Once the collection was digitized, we conducted quality control using the best archival practices specified by the California Audiovisual Preservation Project. After the collection was fully digitized, we initiated the digital archival storage process (using the Stanford Digital Repository), which set the stage for the online exhibit unveiled to the public in November 2018, while also keeping the original files in a safe and secure location for the future.

5. Up to three learning outcomes for the session:

- Gain practical knowledge of the latest digital preservation techniques, including desired file formats and storage solutions.
- Provide insight into the vendor selection process for converting analog audio and video recordings into digital formats that meet current standards for both archival preservation and web-based access.
- Discuss the best open source tools that can be used as part of the digital preservation process, including: HashMark/Checksum, Handbrake, X Lossless Decoder, and TeraCopy.

6. **A list of keywords** (10 maximum):

- Analog to Digital Preservation
- Archival Digital Storage Solutions
- Audio Recordings
- Digital Repositories
- Digitization
- Law -- History
- Oral History
- Women's and Gender Studies

7. **Specific technology or other presentation requirements:**

Digital projector for slides.