Crowdsourcing Metadata: the Revolutionary Cataloging Interface and How it Can Help YOUR Library Expose and Promote Hidden Collections

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Crowdsourcing Metadata: the Revolutionary Cataloging Interface and How it Can Help YOUR Library Expose and Promote Hidden Collections

Presenter 1 Title
Cataloging and Metadata Librarian

Session Type
45-minute concurrent session

Abstract
The crowdsourcing of metadata to expose and promote hidden collections is a significant and growing development in libraries, archives and museums, and offers hitherto unparalleled mass-collaborative potential for digital humanities projects. Originating from the field of citizen science, the online Zooniverse platform has been successfully utilized for this purpose by institutions including the Imperial War Museum, the Folger and the Huntington. This session presents recently published original research\(^1\) in order to analyze and explain the automated quality control features of this major metadata crowdsourcing digital platform. The results, it is argued, are truly revolutionary. We conclude with a brief description of the ‘Project Builder’ feature which enables other institutions – and perhaps even yours – to create new experimental projects aimed at exposing hidden collections via the online crowdsourcing of robust, reliable and accurate metadata.


Location
KIPJ Room G

Keywords
Hidden collections, Crowdsourcing, Zooniverse, Operation War Diary, Digital Humanities, Metadata, Quality Control, Mass collaboration

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Concurrent Session

Abstract
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Description
Professional responses to the enduring hidden collections problem have achieved a great deal. The development of the CLIR Hidden Collections Registry, for example, succeeds in enabling an inter-institutional collaborative approach to exposing resources for which insufficient online descriptions exist. Nevertheless, a growing number of institutions worldwide are actively employing even more innovative and experimental measures designed to augment existing expertise and resources.

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Zooniverse’s next-generation online metadata creation interface has proved capable of being learned by volunteers with little to no previous cataloging experience to facilitate the creation of robust and rich metadata (see Barber, 2018). Crucially, several automated quality control features are built into the interface, leading this presenter to term the invention a revolutionary cataloging interface.

Based on the assumption (proven via research, of course) that cataloging and metadata professionals harbor natural concerns about quality control when considering the prospect of metadata creation by comparatively inexperienced volunteers, it seems clear that an explanation of these automated quality control features constitutes a worthy topic for curious information science professionals.
These features include the consensus principle, a clustering algorithm, geo-mapping and the utilization of controlled vocabularies. Each are central to the Operation War Diary platform, and all shall be demonstrated and explained clearly via real-world examples.

The talk concludes with an introduction to the Zooniverse Project Builder, whereby an institution holding digitized surrogates of analog collections may upload the files, configure the interface and launch their own crowdsourced metadata project to describe the collection items. The potential of mass, worldwide collaborative efforts that may result, it is suggested, transcends our traditional perception of existing boundaries pertaining to digital initiatives.

This session is designed to represent a brief introduction to an experimental and developing field. Demystification of its complexities is achieved via clarity and simplicity of explanation.


Learning Outcomes

- A clear understanding of the intentions of crowdsourcing metadata in the context of libraries, archives and museums
- Insight and learning of the automated quality control features possible in online metadata-creation platforms
- Awareness of Zooniverse's Project Builder, and how the platform enables all institutions to launch crowdsourcing projects and achieve new levels of mass collaboration for digital initiatives

Keywords

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