Digitizing Ontario's Community Memory: Bringing Multicultural History Online

Ontario Library Association Super Conference
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Session Agenda

- Who we are
- Digitization Projects: the lay of the land
- Implementation: The MHSO Digital Archive Project
- Engagement and Outreach
- Maintenance and Steps Forward
- Q and A

Who we are…

Discover Multicultural Ontario

MULTICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF ONTARIO
www.mhso.ca

OurDigitalWorld

Connecting
yourcommunityand
collections
totheworld

Building a networked environment:

- Collaboration
- Partnerships
- Sustainability
- Digital stewardship
- Engagement
- Community memory

ODW Services

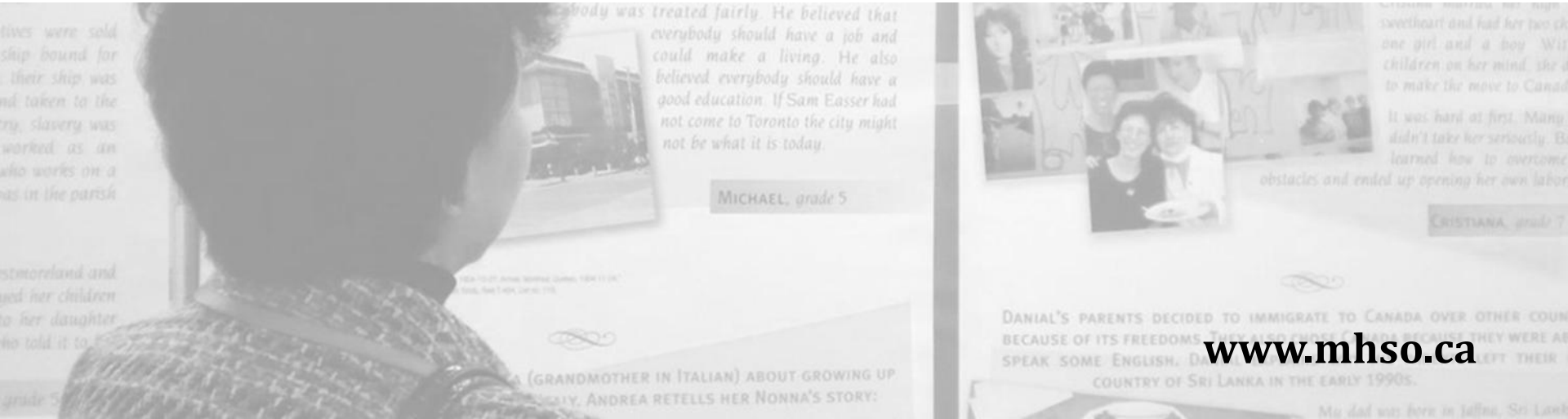
- Consultation
- Resources (including copyright)
- Project management training
- Data migration
- All-in-one Newspaper Digitization
- Custom development

ODW Services

- Access to over 4 million digital images, oral histories, scrapbooks, videos, newspapers, BMDs, etc…
- Aggregated content discovery via the OurOntario.ca portal from 200+ organizations
- Largest online archive of Ontario newspapers, with 200+ years of newspaper content (Full-run scans and BMD indexes) at Ontario News portal
- GovDocs portal offers easy and instant access to over 33,000 documents from the Legislative Library—soon to include the HANSARD

Multicultural History Society of Ontario

- Not-for-profit educational organization and archive
- Goal to publicize, preserve and share heritage materials and learning resources relating to Canada's immigrant and ethnic history



www.mhso.ca

MHSO Services

- Research Support
- Educational Resources
- Workshops and Training Sessions
- Exhibit Design
- Digital Projects

MHSO Collection

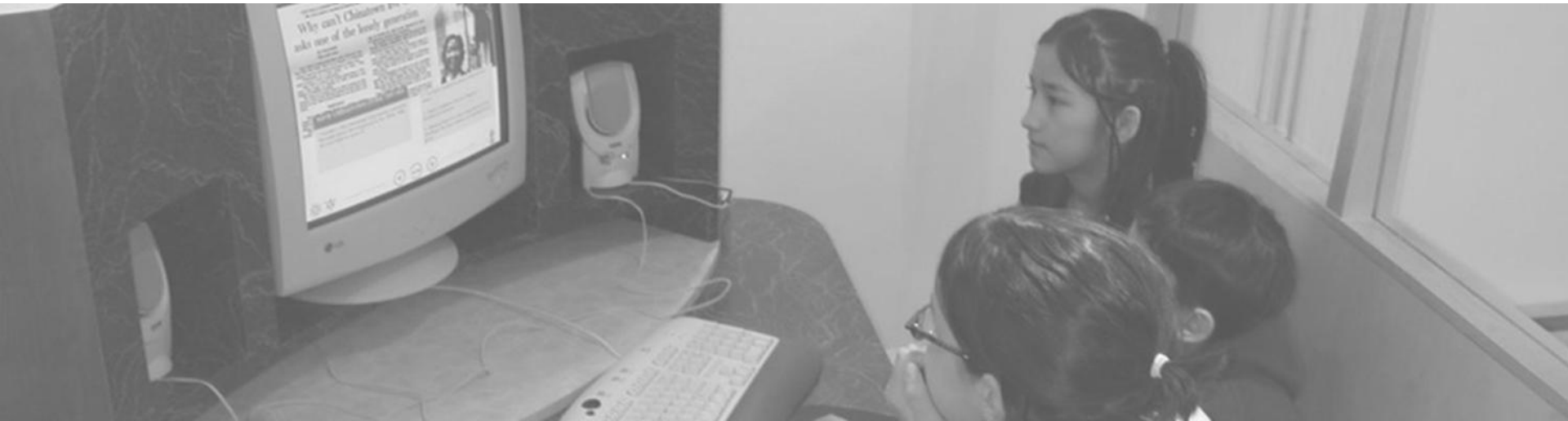
Resources representing more than 50 Canadian ethnocultural groups:

- 9,000 hours of oral history testimony
- 80,000+ historical photographs
- Ethnic newspaper collection
- Academic and community publications
- Written and printed text documents
- Artefacts and personal donations

Digitization projects: the lay of the land

Why digitize?

- Persistent digital divide
- Non-local information seekers
- Preserve, manage, provide access
- Expose, connect, invites participation



Project successes and failures

- No national strategy=no consistent implementation
- Grants reward recipients with existing resources
- One time grants=finite collections, local discovery

Digitization ≠ Access

Trends: Capacity building

- Partnerships & collaboration builds stronger network with:
  - Expertise & experience
  - Resource sharing
  - Multi-organizational buy-in
- Generate support
- Regional representation
- Building community & community memory

What is/n't digitized

- Existing VITA Toolkit content:
  - Thematic (war, famous figures, local heritage, etc.)
  - Bilingual (French/English)
  - Media Type (oral histories, clippings collections, etc.)
- Opportunity to recognize the gaps…

Implementation:
The MHSO Digital Archive Project

Project Goals

- Preserving archival materials
- Publishing new multicultural content
- Creating new contextual information and supplementary resources
- Building new opportunities for collaboration and ongoing user engagement

Project Scope

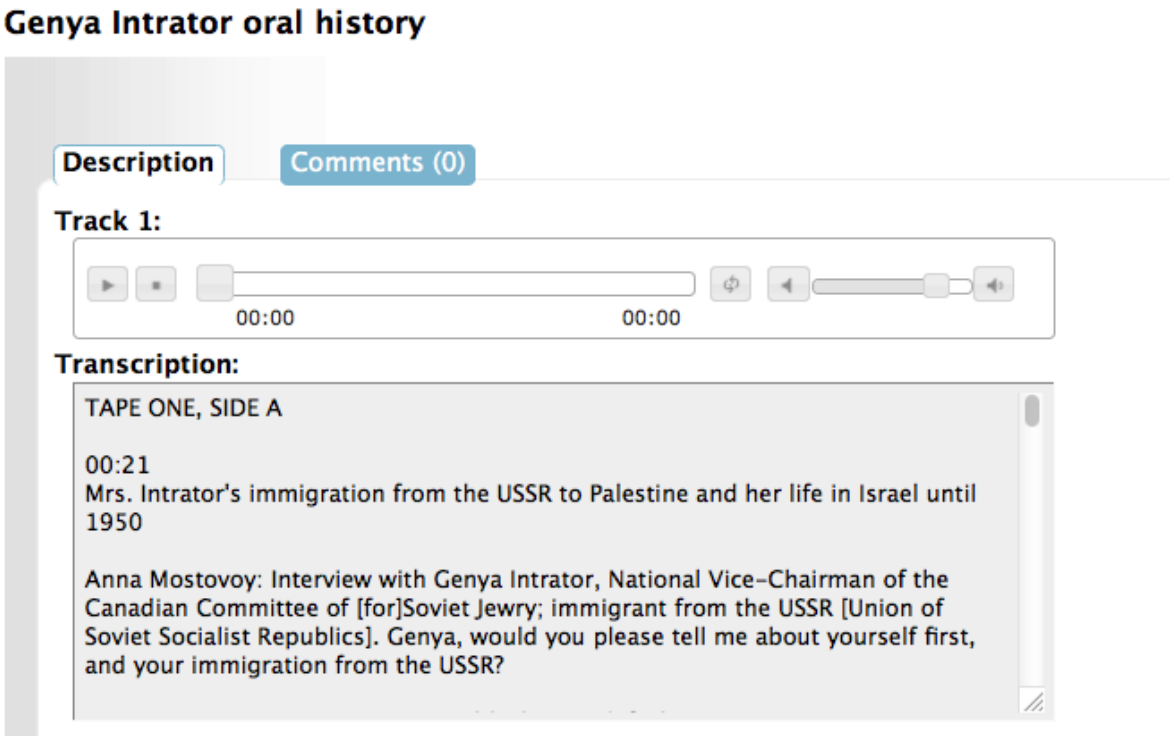
- http://vitacollections.ca/mhso/
- 3000+ digitized oral history interviews
- 500+ interview transcripts
- Historical photographs, ethnic newspapers and related visual materials
- Thematic essays and contextual summaries
- Curriculum-linked educational resources
- Links to online partners and social media networks
- Opportunities for user comments and content submission

Grassroots Tools:

- Web-based software to create and manage multimedia collections
  - Standardized data is re-usable and exportable to other systems
  - Customizable data screens
- Hosted digital objects in secure environment
- Customizable website(s) to display digital collections with searching, browsing and social media options
  - Works with other web applications and tools
  - Community engagement tools

MHSO Custom development

- Streaming audio
- Chapter-view transcriptions

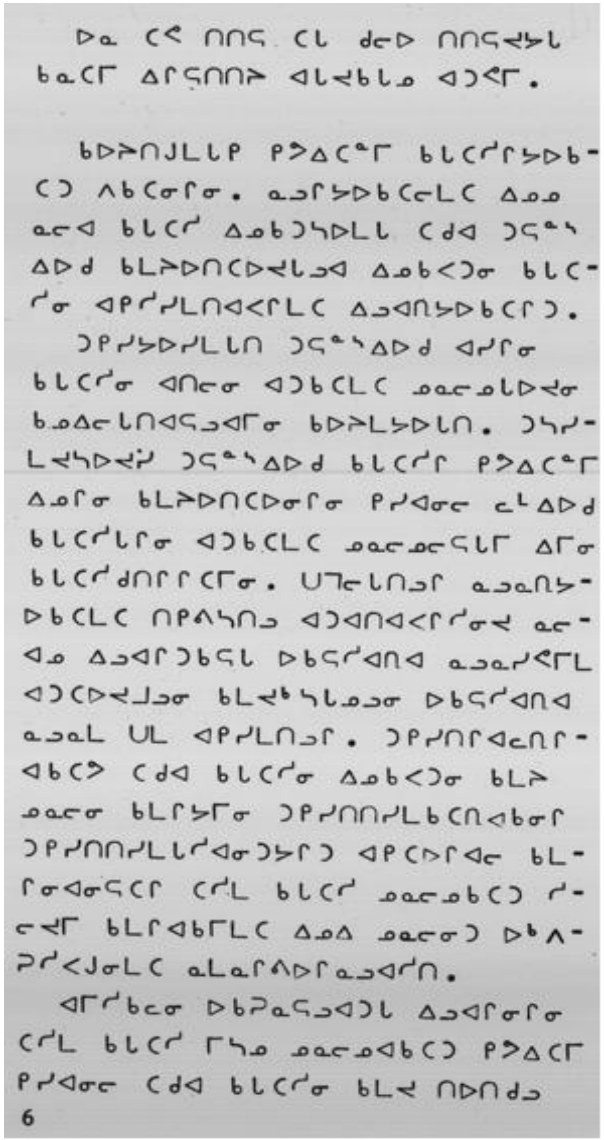


- Multilingual newspaper processing

OCR and Multilingual Newspapers

Newspaper	Language	Newspaper	Language
Ararat	**Armenian**	*Nase Hlasty*	**Czech + English**
Armenian Red Cross Commemorative Album	**Armenian**	*Nase Novine Edinost*	**Slovenian**
Bielarus	**Belarusian**	*Nav Bharat*	**Hindi + English**
Bielaruski Holas	**Belarusian**	*Oznanila Weekly Herald*	**Croatian**
Canada Scotsman	**English**	*Scandinavian Canadian Businessman*	**English + Danish**
Cas	**Czech**	*Scandinavian News*	**English**
Domobrana	**Slovak**	*Slovenska Drzava*	**Slovak + English**
Echo	**Armenian**	*Slovenske Bratstvo*	**Slovak + English**
Gujarat Vartman	**Gujarati + English**	*The Citizens News*	**English**
Inuit Today	**Inuktitut + English**	*The Indian*	**English**
Kanadske Listy	**Slovak + English**	*The Ontario Timberwork*	**English**
N'Amerind News	**English**	*The Scottish Canadian*	**English + Gaelic**

Newspaper Sample: Inuit Today



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Record Samples

- Home Page: http://vitacollections.ca/mhso/search
- Oral History Interview: http://vitacollections.ca/mhso/2665989/data
- Photographs: http://vitacollections.ca/mhso/2667827/data
- Ethnic Newspapers: http://vitacollections.ca/mhso/2743207/data

Engagement & Outreach

Engagement Strategies

- Identifying Target Audiences
- Building Cross-Sector Partnerships
- Crowdsourcing/Volunteerism
- Implementing Digital Engagement Tools

Partnerships

- Field Specialists and Subject Experts
- Educators and Students
- Community Groups and Researchers
- Libraries and Archives
- Heritage and Cultural Organizations
- Government Agencies
- Global Online Audience

Crowdsourcing and Volunteerism

- Recruitment strategies
  - Targeted recruitment
  - Online promotion
- Activities
  - Range of options
  - Flexible schedule and location
- Training / Documentation
  - Standardized guides
  - Off-site training

Online Engagement Tools

VITA Toolkit engagement tools include:

- VITA options for centralized transcription
- Sharebar (social media)
- Mystery questions (used for photos/comments in general)
- Testimonials aka Fan Mail aka Impact statements
- Upcoming community contribution module (private/organizational collections added to collection)
- User tracking capabilities (Google analytics reports re: web traffic)

Maintenance & Steps Forward

Recognizing Impact and Growth

- Grassroots initiative has national and global impact
- Statistics: Traffic and visitor origin
- Encouraging more multicultural collections online

Maintaining the Archive

- Management of hard copies and digital collections
- Organizational adjustments
- Documentation
- Centralization
- Enhancing/upgrading the resource

Thank you!

Discover Multicultural Ontario

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