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...
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
• 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
• 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/](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

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<td>The Ontario Timberwork</td>
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<td>English</td>
<td>The Scottish Canadian</td>
<td>English + Gaelic</td>
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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
• 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!

OurDigitalWorld

Discover Multicultural Ontario

MULTICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF ONTARIO
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