Growing archival sustainability through collaboration: Lessons learned from “The COVID-19 Experience Collection” collaboration at Youngstown State University

Shelley Blundell, Ph.D., Journalism and Communication, YSU
Cassie Nespor, MLS, Maag Library, YSU
Presentation Agenda

● **Cassie:**
  ○ “COVID-19 Experience Collection” description, background.
  ○ Connecting with collaboration partners (Blundell, Michele Gatts, etc.).
  ○ Media coverage and the collection today.

● **Shelley:**
  ○ Magazine Writing and Reporting course collaboration.
  ○ “COVID Voices” special edition, student response.

● **Cassie and Shelley:** Lessons learned, challenges faced.

● *Advice from the audience.*

● Q&A.
“COVID-19 Experience collection” description, background.

- COVID Response collection documents University's actions.
  - websites
  - emails
  - virtual meetings
  - social media posts
- After 3 months of saving University-created materials, ready to collect personal experiences from students, faculty, and staff. Created a separate COVID Experience collection.
Collecting forms

1. COVID-19 Experience social media graphic.

2. COVID 19 Story Collection Form
Connecting with collaboration partners.

Partnership essential for collecting authentic stories of people across campus

Needed connection to variety of experiences on campus- international students, student athletes, students living in residence halls, working off-campus, with care responsibilities, students of color.
Media coverage and the collection today

1. COVID-19 Experience coverage: *The Jambar* student newspaper

Magazine Writing and Reporting course collaboration

COURSE OVERVIEW:

“In this course, you will learn the fundamentals of writing and reporting for magazines to a) produce an individual magazine feature story package, b) produce a topic-assigned feature story package for the Spring 2021 digital edition of YO Magazine, and c) collaborate in groups in the creation and facilitation of a multimedia project for the Spring 2021 digital edition of YO Magazine and for the Maag Library’s “COVID-19 YSU Experience” archival collection.”

- Facilitating collaboration in (and out of) class.
- Teaching students archival literacy foundations = sustainable archives!
YO Magazine Spring 2021 Special Edition “COVID Voices.”

- Eight stories, most containing multimedia elements of some type.
- Covered range of student experiences during pandemic.
- Entire edition now a part of the “COVID-19 Experience Collection” as well - multimedia elements in special edition contribute interactive element to collection.
Student responses documented in “Group Project Self-report” - overwhelmingly positive.

- “I would encourage future students to network with people outside of ... YSU’s journalism program. I think that collaboration is a great way for both parties to benefit. I think that this would also encourage students to build connections, which is a big deal.”

- “I'd like to see this continue beyond the pandemic, because I feel like so much of official university records aren’t from a student perspective, and submissions and databases like this could even coordinate with the student yearbook to provide perspective.”

- “Genuinely, I have never been more satisfied with a group project.”

- “More professors should use this as an assignment/extra credit option!”
Cassie: Lessons learned, challenges faced

Lessons:

● Collaboration with community is essential.

● Define goal of active collecting, stick to parameters, and reevaluate periodically.

Challenges:

● Saving difficult formats such as email, websites, and social media content

● How to write finding aid for all-digital collection and present it in our digital repository

● Increase awareness and use of Archives across campus
Shelley: Lessons learned, challenges faced

- **CHALLENGE**: Magazine course offered in online/synchronous modality.

- **CHALLENGE**: Big aspirations vs. what was doable.

- **LESSONS LEARNED**: Takeaways for students beyond the course -
  - Seeing archives as information resource.
  - Inspiring questions about archival sustainability.
Collection sustainability: Advice from the audience?
Q&A
References


Contact

Cassie Nespor
clnespor@ysu.edu
Phone: 330-941-3788

Shelley Blundell
sblundell@ysu.edu
OR
blundell.shelley@gmail.com