LLILAS Benson Digital Content Assessment and Migration Project
Final Report and Deliverables

Developed for:

LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections

November 24th, 2020

SERVICE OVERVIEW

PROJECT GOAL: to develop evaluative criteria regarding the suitability of exhibits for ingestion to the UTL DAMS; to determine and recommend which of the thirteen (13) legacy web exhibits should be retired or migrated to the University of Texas Libraries Digital Asset Management System (UTL DAMS).

The mission of our project was to assess a set of legacy web exhibits created from selective digitization of materials in the LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections and determine whether each exhibit ought to be migrated over to the new UTL DAMS or permanently retired/"sunsetted." In their current form, these digitized materials remain largely hidden from users and unsearchable. By migrating them to the DAMS, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections has the opportunity to preserve this content, make it more accessible, and potentially raise its profile in the future. In consultation with our project contact and advisor, Theresa Polk, we chose to structure our determinations by creating and using two sets of criteria for the evaluation of each legacy exhibit first at the exhibit-level and then, for those that passed this preliminary evaluation, at the level of their individual resources. These criteria were largely based on the operational policy of the UTL DAMS and structured as two operational rubrics for systematic, spreadsheet-based evaluation of exhibits and resources. These rubrics were also rendered into two (2) graphic flow charts, offering visual representations of our evaluation and decision-making process.

While not accounted for in the planning stage, we also identified the need for a comprehensive index listing each resource within each collection, and created such an index in tandem with the criteria questions. We utilized this index to take representative samples of each legacy exhibit for evaluation – accounting for the number, content, and types (i.e. image, video, audio, etc) of assets. The most substantial component of the project was the set of determinations themselves, which are organized in a detailed spreadsheet displaying responses to individual evaluative questions. Our final recommendations are to migrate eight (8) and sunset five (5) legacy exhibits. These are specified and briefly explained below in the section titled "Exhibit Summaries and Remarks."

PROJECT STATUS

Our team has **successfully completed** the migration project and submitted all deliverables to our project contact by the agreed completion date of: **November 24th, 2020.**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ORIGINAL TASK SCHEDULE

Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Complete?
Milestone 1 – Submit Revised Statement of Work to Project Coordinator	**6 days**	**10/6/20**	**10/12/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 2 – Develop Criteria	**10 days**	**10/12/20**	**10/22/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 3 – Draft & Submit Progress Report	**5 days**	**10/15/20**	**10/20/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 4 - Refine & Finalize Criteria	**21 days**	**10/22/20**	**11/13/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 5 – Create Comprehensive Index	**28 days**	**10/19/20**	**11/16/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 6 – Develop Infographic Flow Chart with Updated Criteria	**7 days**	**10/20/20**	**10/27/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 7 – Execute Collections Assessments	**3 days**	**11/13/20**	**11/16/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 8 – Prepare for Presentation	**7 days**	**11/11/20**	**11/18/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 9 – Project Close	**6 days**	**11/17/20**	**11/23/20**	**Yes**
Milestone 10 – Final Report & Deliverables	**7 days**	**11/19/20**	**11/23/20**	**Yes**

Many of these milestone time frames ran concurrently. Some took longer than anticipated (refining and finalizing criteria) and others took significantly less (executing collections assessments). Time spent on each segment accurately represents the relative complexity/ level of involvement of the task.

WORKFLOW - INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Alexander Reese – established the outline and format for the draft statement of work; took notes at meetings with Theresa Polk and other LILLAS Benson staff; researched the UTL DMAS policy and led the creation of a first and subsequent drafts of evaluative criteria, developing questions for project coordinator along the way; transformed evaluative criteria into operational spreadsheet rubric for the systematic evaluation of collections and assets; contributed to collection evaluations; designed the presentation slide deck and coordinated presentation delivery.

Amber Appel – edited draft statement of work, created a breakdown of project tasks for assigning responsibilities, created outline for group progress report, shared notes from her research on the legacy collections and data migration, contributed to the index of assets, helped edit resource evaluation criteria, participated in group and project contact meetings, created infographic evaluation flowcharts, wrote initial presentation outline, took part in presentation, collaborated on exhibit evaluations, and helped write final report.

Audrey Manchester – contributed majority of statement of work draft, shared notes from research on the legacy collections and data migration, evaluated the collections' resources by creating itemized spreadsheet/index, consulted on collection-level evaluative questions, participated in group and project contact meetings, collaborated on exhibit evaluations, summarized collections at project close, created final report draft/outline

WORKFLOW – JOINT CONTRIBUTIONS

We have all remained in regular communication through email, comments on shared documents, and weekly student meetings; we have participated in meetings with the project coordinator (bi-weekly on average), and provided substantial contributions to our initial statement of work, progress report, and the final summary report herein. Each of us assisted in the creation of the criteria in some fashion, edited and finalized the evaluative criteria, evaluated one-third of the materials in the collections, and crafted presentation slides and presentation script segments.

Each project member has spent an average of 5 hours a week working on the project.

ISSUES ENCOUNTERED

Our project contact initially shared a link to a page on the University of Texas libraries website which hosted the legacy exhibits, but many of the links to the exhibit webpages were broken. We were only able to access six (6) exhibits, leaving seven (7) seemingly irretrievable. Accordingly, we contacted our project contact who directed us toward a mirror of the site that had been archived using the Internet Archive's Archive-It tool. There we were able to access the remaining seven (7) exhibits.

Additionally, as we began constructing our evaluation criteria we realized we were unsure about the eventual application and use of our criteria – whether we were to assess the future of individual resources in the thirteen (13) exhibits at hand or determine the fate of each, entire collection as a whole. After sharing our SOW with our project contact, she made clear that we were deciding to migrate or retire entire exhibits based on the evaluation of individual resources within them. We also came to understand that the evaluative rubric we develop is a tool that may potentially outlive this project and be used and/or adapted to make decisions about migrating legacy collections discovered in the future.

Finally, as expected, we encountered certain complexities and ambiguous language in the DAMs documentation used to develop our evaluative rubric and its criteria, which elicited questions regarding appropriate file formats, how to prioritize certain criteria, and whether or not certain criteria ought to be exclusionary. Our project contact helped resolve many of these questions and invited Mr. David Bliss, Digital Processing Archivist, to a meeting to advise and consult on the rest of these questions. Mr. Bliss valuable insight into UTL digitization standards and the unavoidable need to locate archival masters for any and all materials chosen for migration, which helped us prioritize other evaluative questions.

FINAL DELIVERABLES

1. **Evaluation Criteria/Rubrics**
   1. One Google Sheets file containing exhibit level (thematic/ content-driven) evaluative questions
   2. One Google Sheets file containing individual level (technically-driven) evaluative questions

2. **Index of Assets**
   1. One Google Sheets file containing 13 pages, each listing the resources within that respective exhibits

3. **Graphic Flow Charts**
   1. One collection level graphic flow chart (PDF file)
   2. One individual resource level graphic flow chart (PDF file)

4. **Evaluations of exhibits and assets**
   1. These are visually represented in the aforementioned "Evaluation Criteria/Rubrics" Google Sheets files
   2. Interpretive textual evaluations are enclosed in this report – see "Collection Summaries and Remarks" section below.

EXHIBIT RECOMMENDATIONS AND REMARKS

The following are summaries and remarks on each individual exhibit, which Ms. Polk requested we include in this final report. They serve to both justify and highlight the reasons behind pass/fail determinations as well as give the individuals that will be working on the migrations in the future a sense of what each exhibit comprises or is lacking. "Other remarks" indicate specific issues that might impact future migration efforts.

1. The Américo Paredes Archives

Determination: FAIL – Do not migrate
Collections Summary: Assortment of 5 HTML webpages containing 25 GIF images, 1 PDF, 8 audio files (.rm – Real Media), 1 video
Reason(s) Passed: This exhibit is contains much contextual information and varied types of digital objects from a single collection (speeches, photos, an author bibliography, musical selections). However, links to many assets are broken and other resources are partial representations of assets (excerpts), so (barring the ability to locate archival masters) what is left is an especially small commemorative exhibit celebrating Paredes' life and accomplishments that fails to cohere as a robust collection of materials for scholarly study.

Other remarks: A collection of digitized material from the Américo Paredes papers has the potential to offer great research material to those interested in folklorists, Mexican-American educators, border music, notable UT faculty members, but would need to be re-approached.

2. The George Isadore Sánchez Papers

Determination: PASS – Migrate
Collections Summary: 465 digitized photographs in JPG format
Reason(s) Passed: Work is already underway migrating this collection, so for the purposes of our investigation it wasn't examined in great detail. It was rich, cohesive, and comprised of a large number of related digital objects.
Other remarks: We identified possible benefits of the collection early on - it relates to UT's overall strategic planning on diversity and recruiting Hispanic students throughout Texas and highlights Sanchez's own contributions to education.

3. Early Maps at the Benson Collection

Determination: PASS – Migrate
Collections Summary: 33 digitized maps in GIF form
Reason(s) Passed: Provides high quality scholarly material regarding Latin American physical geography in the form of high-resolutions maps. Although there isn't much interpretive text, that doesn't deter from the maps' value. Serves users' needs, furthers scholars' understanding of the historic region as well as cartographic techniques.
Other remarks: Strong candidate for full-scale digitization effort including greater number of resources.

4. Celebrating Los Pastores: The Mexican Shepherds Playing in San Antonio, Texas

Determination: PASS – Migrate
Collections Summary: 57 digitized photographs in JPG format, 8 audio files (.rm – Real Media)
Reason(s) Passed: Contains a wealth of cultural heritage material and extremely detailed interpretive text for each webpage's collection of photographs. It serves users' needs and furthers a deeper understanding of a specific tradition (modern *pastorelas*). The exhibit is highly cohesive, well-organized, and contains a sufficient number of component digital objects.
Other remarks: Sound assets weren't captured by the Archive-It crawl, so files must be located for those.

5. Abel Briquet Photograph Collection

Determination: PASS – Migrate

Collections Summary: Collection of 64 digitized albumen prints in JPG format
Reason(s) Passed: Exhibit passed all evaluative criteria and contains sufficient collection-level interpretive text on the artist and collection as well as background information. It captures a particular historic moment and region (Porfiriato era Mexico) and could contribute to scholarly research in many different academic fields.
Other remarks: None.

6. Materials from Zapatista "Marcha por dignidad"

Determination: FAIL - Do not migrate

Collections Summary: 19 illustrations of selected documents from the collection that vary between JPG and GIF formats
Reason(s) Failed: This collection barely failed collection-level determinations because it does revolve around scholarly subject matter but felt too idiosyncratic and disparate to provide much in the way of scholarly research/interpretation. Using an all-or-nothing-approach to evaluate the exhibit (which didn't provide sufficient interpretive text), it didn't seem robust enough to justify DAMS migration.
Other remarks: While deemed unfit for migration "as is," if the entire collection were to be digitized in the future, it could better benefit scholars' research into the Zapatista movement, particularly in regard to contemporaneous archiving efforts. Information is available to describe and create metadata for resources via TARO finding aid.

7. Benson Collection's 75th Anniversary Exhibit

Determination: FAIL - Do not migrate

Collections Summary: 16 digitized selections from the collection in JPG format
Reason(s) Failed: Primarily because resources in this exhibit are not derived from a single, coherent collection, they don't serve to further scholars' understanding of a particular historical subject, and the exhibit's scholarly relevance isn't expected to grow over time. The collection was originally an effort to commemorate an anniversary event hosted by UT and appeared to be the result of a highly singular, individualistic or otherwise off-center project.
Other remarks: This was our most obvious collection failure because it was a random amalgamation from disparate collections with no clear "takeaway".

8. ¡A Viva Voz! Featuring Carmen Lomas Garza

Determination: FAIL - Do not migrate

Collections Summary: 20 digital photographs of the artist's original works in JPG format

Reason(s) Failed: Despite potential cultural heritage value as a chicano art collection, the exhibit is primarily geared towards providing press for the artist and her 2009 in-person event at UT. There is no interpretive text, it neither serves users' needs, nor seems to have been created with long-range mindset or developed to further scholars' understanding of chicano art. Rather, it is a highly individualistic, bite-size poster of the artist's work. Also missing necessary metadata or information to generate metadata.
Other remarks: Resources may also exist in digital form elsewhere on the web.

9. St. John d'El Rey Mining Company Archives

Determination: PASS – Migrate
Collections Summary: 42 digitized photographs from the collection in JPG format
Reason(s) Passed: Furthers scholars' understanding of historical subject and moment, substantial interpretive text *and* metadata available, serves users' needs, and is well-organized.
Other remarks: None.

10. Collection of Relaciones Geográficas

Determination: PASS – Migrate
Collections Summary: 12 cartographic illustrations of the collection in GIF format
Reason(s) Passed: Exhibit meets *all* collection-level evaluative criteria. Its self-described popularity with scholars, helpful interpretive text and cohesive nature all position it as one of the strongest candidates for migration.
Other remarks: None.

11. The Eleuterio Escobar Archives

Determination: PASS – Migrate
Collections Summary: 12 HTML web pages, 24 digitized scans in JPG format
Reason(s) Passed: Exhibit passed all evaluative criteria and includes a large number of primary source materials which document the struggle of Mexican Americans to obtain educational equality. Scholarly relevance expected to especially grow over time. Well-organized and contains a descriptive table of contents.
Other remarks: Although twp evaluated resources did not meet all criteria for ingestion to the DAMS as incomplete representations of resources (e.g. one-page of an autobiography instead the complete work), the majority of this exhibit passed all of our developed criteria. An argument could, however, be made for this exhibit's status as a group of collection highlights rather than a robust, cohesive collection of its own. In the case that LLILAS Benson staff and leadership see this as a valuable assessment, the exhibit-level criteria could be amended to include a criterion to account for this condition.

12. Border Cultures: Conjunto Music Exhibit

Determination: PASS – Migrate

Collections Summary: 3 HTML web pages with extensive textual information, 8 audio files, 39 GIF images

Reason(s) Passed: The exhibit would be highly valuable to users researching music of the Mexico-United States border region. The fact that it is split between three substantial mini-collections also strengthens its relevance, which is expected to grow over time.

Other remarks: Some evaluated resources not suitable for DAMS migration : Manuel Peña's article in *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies.*

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13. Chihuahuan Photographs of Larry G. Humphreys

Determination: FAIL - Do not migrate

Collections Summary: 30 digitized photographs in GIF format

Reason(s) Failed: Exhibit is too individualistic for sustained or widespread scholarly investigation and fails to provide sufficient interpretive text or information to describe and create metadata for its component parts. Project contact also foresaw significant copyright complications.

Other remarks: This could be well-suited for some sort of display regarding alumni artistic accomplishments as Humphreys is a 1968 graduate of the University of Texas.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Results of the evaluations

Out of the thirteen legacy exhibits, four (4) failed to pass our initial content-based exhibit-level evaluation and did not move on to resource-level evaluation. These exhibits include Materials from *Zapatista "Marcha por dignidad," Benson Collection's 75th Anniversary Exhibit, ¡A Viva Voz! featuring Carmen Lomas Garza*, and the *Chihuahuan Photographs of Larry G. Humphreys*. Of the nine (9) that passed exhibit-level evaluation, all but one (1) passed our resource-level evaluation as well and we have made the recommendation to migrate the resources in those exhibits. *The Américo Paredes Archives* failed on account of half of the assessed resources failing our evaluation, leading to our conclusion that the rest of the valid resources represented an impoverished collection. Those that passed resource-level evaluation include *The George Isidore Sanchez Papers, Early Maps at the Benson Collection, Celebrating Los Pastores: The Mexican Shepherds Playing in San Antonio, Texas, Abel Briquet Photograph Collection*, the *St. John d'El Rey Mining Company Archives, Collection of Relaciones Geográficas, The Eleuterio Escobar Archives*, and *Border Cultures: Conjunto Music Exhibit.*

Meeting deadlines

Students were able to successfully execute all agreed upon deliverables by the due date. There had been mention at the project's inception of potentially tackling migration efforts if time

allowed, but this did not turn out to be the case. Migration efforts have been left up to later contributors.

Students also identified the possibility of easily adapting the project to evaluate more collections if needed – most time was spent on criteria development, not evaluations. If a similar project were to be offered in subsequent semesters, students would likely have the time and ability to evaluate a greater number of collections, provided the project required a similar level of critical thought and offered similar guidance along the way.

Challenges Developing Criteria

We struggled early on with conceptualizing how to conceive of the evaluative criteria and consequently spent a disproportionate amount of time researching, brainstorming and tackling what ultimately resulted in a low-stakes "what if" questions. Such a granular approach had the effect of making the task at hand seem more complicated than it actually was. Once we received confirmation from our project coordinator that we should be taking a two pronged approach (evaluating both collection and individual resources) and that it should be largely exclusionary – that is, aim at disqualifying a number of collections rather than attempt to develop criteria that included all of them – we were able to move past that initial stage and make headway. Our main focus then turned to examining complexity, completeness and cohesiveness.

Preparation/ Documentation/ Execution Breakdown

Preparation took up a very large part of group members' time early on. Preparation comprised about 60% of the project, documentation required about 30% and execution, the ultimate goal, took only a meager 10%. We include tasks such as creating the index, developing and refining criteria assessments, creating flow charts, and communicating and attending group meetings in the "preparation" category. All of that was instrumental in executing the assessments and helped us to reorient and refocus our efforts along the way. Because strong preparation left us with extremely efficient and well-formatted rubrics to fill in, sensible criteria to refer to, and a knowledge of what (file types) and how much (sample size) to include in each collection's evaluation, execution took a fraction of the time we originally anticipated it taking.

Moving from Planning to Execution

Another important takeaway was that although planning is very important, at some point we had to put the pencil down and actually become absorbed in the work. It's quite easy to get wrapped up in planning, prioritizing, amending those goals, and continuing to plan. While we never lagged behind schedule *per se*, we certainly could have made a conscious effort to stop the planning stage and move forward earlier than we did. We've touched on Agile approaches throughout the Digital Libraries course and that ability to stop, jump in, and re-evaluate in the middle of the action served us better than perpetual planning. In sum, planning and then intermediate reflection/reorientation were of relatively equal value to us.

Specialization and Division of Tasks

One fortunate decision that we did make early on was to specialize and use our skill sets for different smaller tasks. We created a document which allowed us to self-describe our skill, strengths, and weaknesses and used that to efficiently carve out which group member would be best suited for each individual task. Some examples include Amber's strong skills in graphic design leading to her creating the infographic deliverables, Alex's technical prowess and familiarity with Excel leading him to tackle the efficient formatting of the rubric sheets and become intimately familiar with DAMS specifications then develop technical criteria, and Audrey's research skills and proclivity for detail-oriented work leading her to develop our exhibit-level thematic and contextual criteria and jumpstart the index. These reflect only a handful of examples, yet this approach proved highly efficient and led to a near-seamless execution in terms of individual contributions; each person was best suited for the specific task at hand and able to tackle it with a high degree of confidence.

Struggling with "Sensitive" Determinations

Group members were committed to creating rigorous, specific rubrics throughout the project, however, this didn't completely eliminate subjectivity from the evaluation – most notably at the collection level where we had to make judgements about the nature, value, and quality of exhibits. We struggled with making what we called "sensitive" determinations, which assigned cultural heritage value to collections we had little to no experience using or personal attachment to, labelled collections as "useful" in serving users and communities-at-large (with which we also weren't familiar), and resulted in the disqualification of collections which could have meant a lot to some people and reflected the result of a substantial investment of time and effort. We worked through this consternation, but it was significant enough to note.

Sample size

Once we found out which types and what total number of resources we were working with, we realized that it could be useful to execute assessments on select numbers of resources within (or percentages of) larger collections. This was particularly helpful on larger, single file type collections where it would have been tedious to evaluate, for instance, upwards of 400 digitized photographs. After receiving approval from Ms. Polk, we chose to evaluate 10 items or 10%, whichever resulted in a larger selection.

Varying complexity in Exhibits

Next, we discovered that many resources within the exhibits had very similar qualities and quick judgements could be made of those, but that the more "complicated" and varied collections were also the most rich and interesting. Although they will likely take more work to transition from scattershot HTML pages, they had the most textual information associated with them and were generally well-organized and easy to navigate despite their outdated appearances. We

suspect that they will perhaps be of the greatest value for future users and researchers at LLILAS Benson.

More familiarity with resources made developing criteria more intuitive

While this, of course, seems rather intuitive, we didn't come to this realization until the project was well underway. Lots of time was spent going through the DAMS and creating rigorous technical criteria which was in line with software specifications. This was ultimately successful – and necessary – but it prolonged the amount of time spent on the front end of the project. The collection-level criteria development process was a whole lot more intuitive than we expected it to be and after we clicked through every resource in every collection, instinct told us which collections "worked" and which didn't make the cut. In certain instances, we were able to work backwards from these feelings to determine what about these exhibits did not merit migration and integrated those determinations into our exhibit-level content-based criteria.

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS

While this undertaking aimed to assist Benson staff with making suitability determinations for the collections at hand, it was in no way a start-to-finish project that resulted in the successful migration of all assets deemed "worthy." Next steps include the approval of our recommendations by LLILAS Benson Leadership, locating archival master copies of the resources so that they will fulfill DAMS technical requirements (none of the individual resources that we sampled passed on that criterion), developing a migration plan for the exhibits that will be migrated, and then undertaking the process of migration and ingestion.

PROJECT SIGN OFF

SITE CONTACT'S SIGNATURE BELOW ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THEY RECOGNIZE THE WORK COMPLETED

THERESA POLK - PROJECT COORDINATOR / CLIENT

(signature)

Signature

Theresa Polk

Printed Name

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Title

November 24, 2020

Date

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