Collections Chaos: Understanding What We Have, Where it Lives, How People Find It, and Making It All Better
Why Can’t I Find What We Have?  
A Brief Timeline of Confusion & Frustration

**Discovery**
- December 2011-January 2012
  - New AD Arrives.
  - The State Auditor has some questions for you.
  - New AD attempts to Browse Manuscripts & Archives to learn about collections.
  - New AD discovers there is different information in different systems and is not sure where to go to find out about collections.
  - Discussions with staff about state of information, begin learning about legacy projects.

**Exploration**
- February – May 2012
  - Understanding Legacy Archon Project
  - Understanding Early EAD
  - Understanding Archives Florida / PALMM

**Surprises**
- April-May 2012
  - What do you mean everything was on the old website but it’s gone?
  - What do you mean there is only a paper finding aid? Discovering the notebooks.
  - What is the most accurate record of our collections?
If I Can’t Find It, Who Can?
Don’t Panic, Make a Plan

**Identify**

- What is our ultimate goal?
- What are our issues?
- What do we know? What don’t we know?
- What has been done before?
- Can we use that work?
- What is our most accurate, most comprehensive record?

**Inventory**

- Starting at the source – using the Accessions book & spreadsheet to create an inventory list
- Including Strozier, Pepper, and Heritage Protocol Collections
- Listing Processed & Unprocessed Collections
- Creating columns for all possible locations of information

**Action**

- Phase 1 - Compiling the spreadsheet
- Phase 2 – Working with the spreadsheet
- Phase 2 – Compiling Information
- Phase 2 – Analyzing the data
- Defining future phases
Ultimate Goal

• For Manuscript and Archives Collections to
  – Complete online access
  – Fully searchable (at least at the collection level)
  – Coordinated representation in multiple access points
Project – Phase 1

• Key Goals
  – Build a comprehensive list of all manuscript and archives collections across all areas
  – Identify access & description points (or lack there of)
  – Understand what currently has basic access points & description, what has full finding aid information, and what has no access points
  – Identify across areas processed & unprocessed materials
  – Use the information gathered to identify key problems of access & description & then create plan(s) to address & correct issues
Meanwhile, Back at the Farm...

- **Staffing changes**
  - **June 2012 – Major Library Reorganization**
    - Special Collections & Archives Division
      - Strozier Special Collections (7 FTE, 2 PTE, 2 Grad Assistants)
      - Heritage Protocol (1 FTE)
      - Pepper Library (1 FTE, 1 PTE)
      - **Cataloging & Description (10 FTE)**
        » Cataloging
        » Authorities Control & Bibliographic Maintenance
  - **August 2012 – Digital Archivist Begins Work**
  - **September 2012 – Minor Library Reorganization**
    - Addition of **Digital Library Center (2 FTE)** to Division
We Have a List.
It’s a Long List.
It’s Not a Pretty List.
We Have a Lot of People.

We Can Do This.
Getting Started

- Removing the “problem collections” for the experts
- Training those who would be doing the information gathering
- Creating a tracking spreadsheet
A Good Sign

- No Paper or Electronic Record
- Paper Record Only
- Electronic Record Only
Initial Results

- Items without Record
- Items with Record
- Items with Record + Link
- Items with Record + Broken Link
- Items with Record only
- Items with Record + FA

Legend:
- Catalog
- Archives Florida
- DigiTool
- Archon
Besides the Numbers...

• 1-item collections abound
• Logistics of training, tracking and completing the first phase in 30 days with 25 people
• Knowing our own jargon, rules, workflows and history
• Consistency is the biggest issue to face/clean up/fix moving forward
Breaking It Down into Work

- Paper Finding Aid Conversion
- Cataloging
- Collections
- Managing the pieces we can’t see yet
Tackling the Paper Finding Aids

• Good news – ONLY 21 COLLECTIONS on the list
• Engaged Graduate Assistants to review, double check, and devise plan for paper finding aids
Thinking about Cataloging/MARC Work

• Collections that have NO access points
• Catalog collections with access points in another system
  – What information can we use from basic records & finding aids in PALMM & Archon?
  – Can we automate this, all of it or part of it?
• Unprocessed Collections
• Correct or remove broken links in existing catalog records
Thinking about Collections Work

- Reclassification
  - Some MSS collections will be classified as UA/HP
  - Creating University Archives, Faculty Papers, Manuscript Collections definitions and structures
  - Review/Revision/Correction of collection & accessioning numbering

- Reprocessing

- Finding Aid Production
Questions We Know We Still Have

- Should we have or do we need all of the collections in our possession?
- What should we do with so many individual item collections?
- How will we make a functional distinction between University Archives, Faculty Papers, and Manuscript Collections?
- What suggestions (requirements) will the Auditor General have for inventory control of archival collections?
- There are new questions with every step in the process
Which Will Get Us To

• Setting Phase 3 Goals
  – Breaking the down the steps
  – Determining Deadlines
  – Assigning tasks
• Defining next steps or new problems as we go
• Communicating success, new access points
• Communicating expected completion times for more complicated aspects of project
Closer to Our Ultimate Goal

• For Manuscript and Archives Collections to
  – Complete online access
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Questions?