Introduction

In 2015-2016, UNLV Special Collections and Archives conducted a survey assessing its over 1,300 archival collections. This survey identified over 2,000 legacy media items that would need further review. In 2018, another survey was conducted of just the audiovisual material. This AV survey identified and evaluated over 11,000 items in archival collections and unprocessed materials.

How to Begin

1. Review current institutional data: previous surveys, keyword search for formats in finding aids, inventories, and databases

2. External review: surveys at similar institutions, reference material to help identify format types and preservation concerns

3. Tool review: open source applications, Google Sheets, Excel

*Google sheets are customizable, fields are easily added and removed, no cost, easy to use, can be edited by multiple users simultaneously

4. Select data points and create survey tool

*Points to consider: Collection title, collection number, accession number, title or description, dates, commercial/rare/unique, portion already digitized, format type, location, access restrictions, deed of gift, copyright, conservation concerns, linear and cubic feet, research value/frequency of use of collection, surveyor recommendation

5. Create manual

6. Test tool and manual

7. Train survey team

8. Conduct survey and track metrics

Introduction

In 2015-2016, UNLV Special Collections and Archives conducted a survey assessing its over 1,300 archival collections. This survey identified over 2,000 legacy media items that would need further review. In 2018, another survey was conducted of just the audiovisual material. This AV survey identified and evaluated over 11,000 items in archival collections and unprocessed materials.

Approximately 4,000 items are “unique”, only found at UNLV. Curators will use the gathered data to review those unique collections to prioritize for digitization.

Tips

- Match survey fields with those required by digitization vendor

- Organize survey so that it is tailored to how curators can use it most efficiently to make decisions about digitization

- Conducting the survey at the collection level will save time

Curators use survey (uniqueness of content, dates, formats, etc.) to make collection recommendations for digitization

Surveyor with help of student assistant conducts survey

Surveyor prepares inventory and estimate of items chosen for digitization

Surveyor meets with curators as AV materials in recommended collections are physically reviewed.