

Slide 1: Title (0:00)

Thank you for joining me today. Before I introduce myself, I'd first like to mention that all of the images in this presentation (with the exception of the two introductory photos on the next slide) are available as **Open Access** resources in the *University of Florida Digital Collections* (also known as the "UFDC"). Please feel free to visit, browse, and study them in their full context at the url on the bottom of this slide.

Links to all UFDC images in this presentation are available on the slides themselves, or in the notes of the *PowerPoint* file, which itself is located in the *UF Institutional Repository* under a **Creative Commons 'Attribution Share Alike' License** (along with the notes, this script, audio, etc.). I'll provide the URL on the final slide.

Slide 2: Introduction (1:10)

Good afternoon and welcome. I'm Dan Reboussin, African Studies Librarian at the University of Florida. I work in the George A. Smathers Libraries and support UF teaching and research relating to the African continent. Today I'm presenting an overview of African Studies digital collections in the UFDC.

Slide 3: Overview & agenda (1:30)

Is it all right to have favorite items in a collection? This portrait of a young Liberian woman with her face powdered from a Sande society initiation ceremony immediately seized my attention when I first encountered it in a donated scrapbook. The background image on the left is a Sande helmet mask, the only African mask traditionally worn by women. Statistics on collection size and usage lack the qualitative impact of even a few unique and brilliant images like this—one reason why I enjoy working with manuscript collections and consider them an important part of my work.

My overall goal in presenting today is to introduce the online Open Access African Studies collections in UFDC (totaling about 2,000 titles and over 4,200 items, comprised by over 156,000 pages):

- I'll first prepare you by offering a sense of the *status and goals* of the collection;
- We'll embark on a whirlwind *tour* of the various sub-collections and see some examples of the individual contents;
- Next, I'll provide a context for understanding the *significance* of these collections;
- Then we'll take a quick look at the search and view *functions* available through the SobekCM software interface, and;
- Consider the value of several of these features for *assisting researchers*;
- We'll review a few *frequently asked questions*, and then I'll invite your questions;
- Finally, I'll suggest how we can continue our conversation by providing several *points of contact*.

...Are there any questions or technical problems before we begin?

Slide 4: Collection status & goals (3:00)

UF is one of the top-ranked federally funded Title VI *National Resource Centers* and *Foreign Language Area Studies* centers for Africa. Our goal in the libraries is to build and manage collections in all formats to support the ongoing and future needs of scholars engaged in African related research and teaching. We support over 100 UF faculty affiliates of the Center for African Studies in ten of UF's sixteen colleges, along with many visitors, students, and (as a regional resource center) many others beyond our own campus.

This multidisciplinary collection development effort leaves a fascinating legacy: layers of materials that were once considered state of the art, but which now may take on an embarrassing or humorous aspect. These can have educational value in reminding us to stay humble about the state of our own knowledge and aware of potential biases in current intellectual trends. In part because of the limitations of copyright and permissions for online distribution, our digital collections reflect some of these earlier perspectives more than we might otherwise choose to represent, but we make an effort to select materials that have current relevance and are useful to existing academic programs and interests. With over one-and-a-quarter million views (since the UFDC launch in 2006), we believe we're doing well in supporting public and research needs.

Slide 5. Significance (4:35)

Our African Studies digital collections are significant in that they derive from a library collection of African Studies that is distinctive as a regional resource unmatched south of North Carolina and east of Kansas (...or perhaps even California). Many of our holdings (in print and online) are unique, rare, or scarce.

This rare item with such a dramatic illustrated front board is held by about two dozen libraries worldwide, but in the US only at Stanford University, UCLA, the University of Notre Dame, Boston University, and the University of Florida. The collection supports a large and diverse set of academic programs, giving it a measure of cohesion and focus in several areas that are not well represented elsewhere in the US or internationally.

Slide 6: Sub-collections (5:30)

One of the ways we have arranged digital collection materials is by creating sub-collections and landing pages. Current African Studies sub-collections are represented by the vertical column of five icons here:

1) The *Arts of Africa* is comprised of materials from the *Harn Museum of Art*. We've had a collaborative relationship with the Harn for many years now, based in part on the museum's policy of collecting only materials intended for exhibition, while the libraries are able to curate archives in support of their research and interpretive work, fundamental for creating public exhibits. As we'll see later, our *Digital Services production shop* has provided museum quality images for the Harn site, which we can also display in the UFDC.

2) Moving down the column, the *George Fortune Collection* is represented by the second box. I'll introduce this linguistics collection on the next slide.

3) The *Derscheid Collection* includes about 800 mostly French-language, colonial and pre-colonial Rwandan history research manuscripts collected in the 1920s and '30s. Previously only available on microfilm, which was privately shot by one of our faculty members in 1965. We secured permission from the original collector's family to scan and distribute these materials online to a scholarly community that considers the set as an important resource across several disciplines. We provide these (admittedly) arcane materials in a setting that makes them easily discoverable by those who need them, while offering a scholarly context to support learning, research, and interpretation.

4) I enjoy talking about another favorite set, the *Onitsha Market Literature*, of

which we have about a dozen pieces online. These pamphlets represent the reading interests of the first literate generation of Igbo people, who learned English in mission schools in the mid-Twentieth Century. Book stall entrepreneurs produced these “chap books” from the late 1940s until the market in which they were sold was destroyed during the Nigerian-Biafran War in 1968. So these cheap books are both tragic (because of the circumstances of their sudden demise) as well as fun (because they present a naïve approach to familiar genres like romance, social or moral advice, and thrillers). At the same time, serious scholars have compared them to early English popular books and have applied various bibliographic techniques to analyze their creation, letter press printing, and distribution. Several authors were both the publishers and sellers of their own work, so they were close to their readers, knowing firsthand what they would buy from the book stalls on market day with a few spare coins.

(8:20) 5) Last here is the largest of these sub-collections, *Photographs of Africa* is a catch-all title for several substantial albums and scrapbooks, as well as many images without a good deal of context. We are currently working to improve the presentation of the Rikli albums, in particular, but until that’s done they’re still all functional and accessible:

a) I just mentioned the Martin Rikli collection of Ethiopian photographs. I’ll offer a few comments on this set of albums after the following slide.

b) Eugene Manis was a plant breeder who in 1941 travelled to Liberia for his first job, created an interesting scrap book, and in several letters described his life on a Firestone plantation, offering insight into the work and living conditions of the rubber tappers among other things. He collected a number of masks, one of which is a

complete *Deangle* masquerade (full costume), now housed in the Harn Museum. In the scrapbook there's a photograph of the collector standing beside the fully costumed dancer (an extreme rarity to have documented in this way, so it's a very special image).

c) Lewis Berner was an entomologist best known for his work on mayflies. He did all of his post-secondary education at UF and was a UF faculty member for his entire career. He took several albums of photographs during his World War Two military service. He was assigned to a malaria control unit in West Africa. He also did contract work after the war, both in Ghana and then (later) in Malawi with Archie Carr (best known for his work on sea turtle conservation).

d) Finally among these sub-collections are the studio photographs taken in Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) by Richard Ndimande and his family (we don't have good information on which were taken by him, his father, or his wife). The black and white negatives all date from before 1973. The collector, Frank Jolles, has written about how these images continue a tradition of courtship messages formerly expressed through beadwork (and later, he argues, transferred as text messages via mobile phones). I'll close with a few of these images on my final slide (where the citation is available in the notes with a link to the full text, which I just discovered is available as Open Access).

Slide 7: Fortune (11:00)

I mentioned I'd come back to the Fortune sub-collection, which brings together a small set of published and manuscript materials from his scholarly research for Shona, the major language spoken in Zimbabwe. A small representation of the print and manuscript collection is available online but, for example, an index of the cataloged books in his collection provides researchers with an overview of the books that can be found in our Online Public Access Catalog. While the language primers are technically published, they are extremely rare: early editions were manually produced, locally, in small quantities for mission schools, using letter presses. School children are known to be tough on books. Few examples of these have survived, but they document the development of standard orthographies for several Southern African languages and regional dialects.

Slide 8: Rikli (11:45)

Some of the most popular resources on our site are the three Martin Rikli photo albums, which document defensive preparations for the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and its capital city Addis Ababa in 1936, along with some images of the early days of the military occupation. As one League of Nations member attacked by another, the only substantial defensive action at the time came from Nazi Germany (that's not a suggestion of noble intent—Hitler was interested in weakening Mussolini before Italy joined the Axis pact in 1937). So, while intended for propaganda purposes, these high quality, well preserved images by a professional filmmaker offer a unique, insider's view of the court of Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930-1974. For example,

notice the dog under foot in the image on the right—Chihuahuas had the run of his imperial palace and show up in many of these photos. The collection has truly interdisciplinary research value, documenting many civil institutions and events, offering insight into the historical moment, and presenting an astonishing wealth of images of everyday life, both in the city, and throughout the Ethiopian countryside. I guess you could call this one another of my favorite children.

Slide 9: Digital African collections have been built collaboratively (13:00)

The digital African Studies materials comprise a collaborative, diverse collection with original sources from locations such as the Harn Museum of Art (as mentioned earlier), the Map & Imagery Library, Rare Books & Manuscripts, as well as (in some cases) our main print books collection, though materials considered for digitization from circulating locations are generally relocated during the process.

[If we have an extra moment, I'd like to preview for you one feature of the SobekCM system here... If we click through to the hat image, you can see the 360 degree rotation view that I'll talk about more in a few minutes.]

Slide 10: Materials diversity (13:30)

The range of materials available in terms of subjects, time period, format, and location is extremely broad. Subjects include the arts, languages and literature, science, history, and culture. One of the earliest digitized African related items is the 1544 Munster map of the continent (not the West African woodcut map on the previous slide, which is also from the 16th century but not as old). Self-submission materials from the Institutional Repository represent the most current scholarship and projects. Among the many formats represented are books, journals, gray literature, photographs, prints, maps, plastic arts, scrapbooks with *realia*, manuscripts, primary research materials, journal articles, preprint drafts, theses, student class projects, and more.

Slide 11: Science materials (14:30)

Our focus in digitizing science materials is (at least in part) the history of UF faculty and other scientists working in Africa. These include such areas as field and conservation biology, entomology, disease control, and agricultural development. The pink page on the left is one of the Ian Parker elephant data sheets, part of a small grant project just getting underway to transcribe biological data collected in the 1960s. Making these data machine readable will support new research in veterinary medicine and other fields. I mentioned the anti-malaria work of Lewis Berner, but other entomological work is represented by this map of Tse-Tse fly distribution. Finally, many agricultural development materials are included, largely as part of Professor Peter Hildebrand's donated office collection.

Slide 12: Content materials not found under sub-collections (15:20)

That was rushed, but I did call it a ‘whirlwind tour.’ Please remember that all of these collections are online, along with many others that we haven’t touched on. Let’s just catch our breath for a moment, and ask: “what’s not represented by these sub-collections?” These thematic groups we’ve created absolutely don’t represent the complete contents of the African Studies collections in UFDC. They’re simply convenient starting points for researchers to get oriented to the collection. It’s also worth noting that overall, only one percent of our collections are digitized. If you’re interested to know more, please visit and search, browse, and explore on your own. I’ll be happy to help if you have any questions or encounter any problems.

Slide 13: Functions & features: browse (16:30)

UFDC is crawled regularly and extensively by Google and other search engines, so all of these materials are available to general web searches, but you may find that getting into the database itself produces some good ideas and materials that you can use in your own work or in supporting others’ research.

This quick introduction to some of the functions and features of the UFDC database should help you navigate within the site. Many of these features are contextual. It’s handy to have just those tools at hand that you may need in a given situation, but the fact that *what’s available can change from one screen to another* may also stump you from time to time. I find that as I go back to a page more than once, I get used to the functions and features available there.

I'm sure you'll agree that much effective searching begins with browsing. Once you select a sub-collection, clicking on the "All items" tab displays a list with several alternative views (as upside-down tabs for Index, Table, and Thumbnails). Notice the facets on the left for narrowing results. You can browse at the full collection level, too, using the facets on the left to limit your results. I find that browsing (all items, new items, and the map browse if it's applicable) helps me to familiarize myself with the contents of a sub-collection, allowing for serendipity in ways that searching may not. The map browse is a cool feature available for some collections, but it hasn't been set up for any African materials yet.

Slide 14: Functions & features: search (18:00)

Search is another valuable tool. Simple text search and advanced text search are available within the sub-collection or for the full UFDC collection, using the labeled tabs you see here. You can choose to limit the fields searched for individual terms using the Advanced Search tab (author, title, etc.), or allow the search to cut across all fields. There are radio buttons to control precision, too. The effectiveness of these options is limited by the availability of sufficient metadata, so just because your initial search isn't successful doesn't mean that the targeted resource can't be found through other means, such as browsing or contacting the subject specialist for assistance. We know this as librarians, but it can be helpful to remind ourselves that *digital collection metadata* aren't always as well developed as catalog bibliographic records.

Slide 15: Functions & features: working with search results (19:00)

So, let's say you've completed a successful search. How do you manage or manipulate the results? As you can see here, users can switch the screen presentation among the Brief, Table, and Thumbnail views. I find that switching back and forth helps me notice different aspects of materials (even when I'm already familiar with the contents of a collection). Again, this allows for serendipity and enhances opportunities for discovery. The various views also allow for sorting by various criteria (such as Rank, Title, and Date). Within a volume, there are additional display controls for thumbnail size, number of thumbnails displayed per page, a page selection dropdown, and (where available) a page turner view.

Once you select an individual page or image, tabs are available for reviewing the Citation information, the Page Image, (as we saw) a 360 degree view in some cases, or enabling the Zoomable view (with image tools). These allow detailed views, selection and composition for jpeg downloads, and further work in your own graphics application. For more demanding needs such as creating illustrations for publication, you may use the "Contact Us" link on the bottom left footer to request higher resolution files (the link preserves the page context for the recipient, so there is no need to cut and paste urls).

Slide 16: Functions & features: Zoom quality and image rotation (20:15)

The 360 degree image rotation view that we previewed earlier is available only for 3 dimensional objects, allowing users to select the portion of a piece that they'd like to study with the zoom tool. Here is an example of the level of zoom available...the bottom line is that it gets really close. Together, these are important features for the research use of these collections. Art historians, for example with this image, can document the wear on individual beads and study their attachment to the object substrate, which is a woven hat.

Slide 17: Functions & features: Citation information tab (20:45)

The Citation information tab isn't as visually interesting, but this is the bibliographic and metadata information hub. It displays all of the item and collection information available and needed for complete scholarly attribution purposes (including the permanent url address). Usage information for individual items is also publically available in the upside-down tab to the right.

Slide 18: Research resources (21:15)

There are a few additional points to make for research users of these online collections. This image indicates where to find additional information on Fair Use and Source Attribution (notice the link on the left of each page footer next to "Contact Us"). Also, notice the "myUFDC Home" link, which allows researchers to create an account to save item links, searches, and to organize their results.

Slide 19: FAQ (22:00)

Three common questions are:

Q: Can I print an image for personal or scholarly use?

A: Yes. Images and contents are provided as Open Access resources, so they are available for personal and scholarly use, with proper attribution.

Q: When will more material be digitized?

A: Materials are digitized based on collection development needs, research activities, preservation considerations, staff time, and funding available. If you need something particular for your research, please contact the collection curator or subject specialist.

Q: How do I access print materials?

A: Search for print and other format library materials in the Online Public Access Catalog available at: <http://uf.catalog.fcla.edu/uf.jsp> or contact the collection curator or subject specialist.

I'm sure those don't cover all the questions you have. We have plenty of time, so please feel free to raise any of your own questions now.

Slide 20: Thank you (23:00)

Thank you for your time and attention, it's been a pleasure. Please feel free to visit the African Studies Collections at the url shown here.

I'm happy to continue our conversation at any time, so feel free to raise any further questions now or contact me personally later.

This entire presentation is available online in the *UF Institutional Repository* as shown on the bottom right of this slide (at <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00013641>). **(24:00)**