ARL Fellowship for Digital and Inclusive Excellence: Developing Online Exhibits for the George A. Smathers Latin American and Caribbean Collection

Presentation by Katiana M. Bagué
May 4, 2018
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Internship Purpose

To provide undergraduate students from underrepresented groups the opportunity to acquire experience and develop expertise on digital stewardship

To participate in discourse regarding diversity, inclusion and social justice
Online Exhibit Work + Challenging Underrepresentation

How can we begin to tackle underrepresentation if our major cultural institutions do not allow for diverse perspectives to emerge and collaborate in order to combat some of the social issues present in society?

Combining online exhibit work with themes about underrepresentation and diversity seems like a step in the right direction. It can offer audiences a new perspective and the space to reflect on something they have never considered before.
George A. Smathers Latin American and Caribbean Collection
Cuban American Dream Timeline

1. Convert the physical exhibit of the Cuban American Dream, curated by Margarita Vargas-Betancourt with assistance from Alexis Baldacci, to an online timeline
Timeline JS

A digital timeline was created by using a Google spreadsheet, and inserting the labels from the physical exhibit, images of the items in a jpeg format and other important metadata.
Cuban American Dream Timeline

Additional labels were created in order to include the major events in Cuban history that in some way influenced immigration to Florida. Online images from the Miami Herald were placed alongside these labels, as the newspaper has an extensive coverage of Cuban history and affairs.
Children’s Books and UFDC Items Pairing

2. Collaborate with the Alachua County Public Schools Media Centers in order to challenge underrepresentation in youth literature.
Omeka

Omeka is an open source content management system that allows individuals to curate and publish online exhibits. One is able to sign up for the online tool and upload any images and items unto their account. For each item, one has to enter the appropriate metadata using the Dublin Core standard.

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The Expression and Legacy of Landownership in Mexico: Maps from the Luis García Pimentel Collection

3. Curate an online exhibit for the Pimentel Collection. The collection gathers a multitude of documents from the middle of the sixteenth century to the early 1900s that show the transactions of ownership and management of sugar mills in Mexico.
Adobe Muse

Adobe Muse is part of the Adobe Creative Cloud and allows one to design websites without using code. Starting with a blank page, users can design pages by adding color, text and images. Additionally, with the Widgets Library, one can add a menu, slideshows and other interesting features.
Black & White, Negro y Blanco: Reflections of Puerto Rico

4. Curate an online exhibit on any theme or topic that I desired. I chose to focus on a series of black and white photographs regarding individuals living in a shantytown in Puerto Rico during the 1950s and 60s.
Creating and Enhancing Metadata

As a side project, I created and enhanced the metadata for the black and white photographs and made sure to mention that they were a part of an anthropological case study conducted by Helen Icken Safa.
Revisiting Adobe Muse

I decided to experiment with Adobe Muse again for this exhibit. Given that the title and the photographs reflect a theme of black and white, I thought it appropriate to design the online exhibit using minimal coloring.
Conclusion

The online exhibits I helped develop I think introduce audiences to diverse perspectives about Latin American content, and bring forth stories that are at times underrepresented.

Online Exhibit Links:

http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/cubanamericandream/

http://challengingunderrepresentation.omeka.net

http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/pimentel
Acknowledgments

A special thanks to all those who helped me during this fellowship:

My supervisor, Dr. Margarita Vargas-Betancourt, who gave me constant guidance, believed in me, and encouraged me to pursue interesting projects related to Latin America.

My mentor, Dr. Hélène Huet, who met with me on a regular basis to discuss the work involved in the digital humanities and gave me helpful insights to how to develop a digital project.

UF Libraries Exhibits Coordinator, Lourdes Santamaria-Wheeler, who taught me how to use Adobe Muse, gave me great advice on exhibit work and published the online exhibits that I developed on an accessible platform.

Graduate student Alexis Baldacci, who passed on the Cuban American Dream project onto me and taught me the basics on how to use TimelineJS.

Curator of the Baldwin Library of Historical Children’s Literature, Suzan Alteri, who instructed me on how to use Omeka.
Professor Efrain Barradas from the Department of Latin American Studies, who reviewed the content from my exhibit "Black & White, Negro y Blanco: Reflections of Puerto Rico" and gave great and extremely helpful suggestions.

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