

Researchers keeping digital history alive

■ UI team working on three-year Library of Congress project

By GREG KLINE
News-Gazette Staff Writer

Historians of the present can read through documents from Abraham Lincoln's legal career in Illinois, the founding of America and even records of ancient Egypt, assuming they read hieroglyphs.

The New York Times edition announcing the sinking of the Titanic, President Roosevelt's Pearl Harbor speech, film footage of Neil Armstrong stepping onto the moon are available for us to see and hear, at least in recordings and on microfilm.

But folks in the future could find material covering this period of history harder to come by because no "hard copy" of it ever existed.

News and other information contained in Web pages, government documents and sound and video are increasingly being "born digital." That's creating challenges for those concerned with preserving such material and making it available in the years to come.

University of Illinois researchers may provide some solutions in a three-year \$3 million project with the Library of Congress, announced this month.

Among other things, they're to develop criteria for automatically collecting, capturing and preserving digital mate-

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Robert K. O'Daniel/The News-Gazette
Beth Sandore and John Unsworth, seen in Unsworth's office at the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences last week, are leading a \$3 million project to look at how to best preserve digital information for the future.

History

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rial, as well as sharing it among libraries and other repositories.

They also will build sample collections in digital repositories hosted by the UI-based National Center for Supercomputing Applications and the Online Computer Library Center in Ohio, the UI's major partner in the effort, which is developing software to help automate the process.

"You have a job that's too big for people to do by hand," said John Unsworth, dean of the UI Graduate School of Library and Information Science. He's the co-principal investigator on the project with Beth Sandore, associate university librarian for information technology planning and policy.

Meanwhile, the NCSA this week also announced a half-million-dollar partnership with the National Archives and Records Administration to investigate preservation and access mechanisms for federal, presidential and congressional electronic records.

Unsworth, who came to the UI from the University of Virginia

last year, related an experience that shows why a lot of digital material today may be the informational equivalent of an endangered species.

Someone was looking for a copy of Virginia's first Web page and came to him because he had served on the committee that developed it. He didn't have a copy and it turned out nobody else had saved one either. That piece of the university's history was simply gone.

"There's tremendous turnover in the Web and we rely on it for all sorts of day-to-day information," Unsworth said. "The problem is only getting bigger."

Meanwhile, making sure the materials are preserved is only part of the battle, Unsworth and Sandore said.

Books have lasted for centuries as a readily accessible storage and distribution medium for information, for example. Basically, somebody only needs to be literate to use one.

But digital hardware and software changes rapidly. Yesterday's common format can quickly become today's more or less unusable one. Try finding a machine to access a WordStar file on a 5¼-inch floppy disk these days.

"The issues can get complicated," Sandore said.

She and Unsworth said the UI, with its highly rated library school and a university library that's been working on digital archiving for several years, was a natural partner for the Library of Congress project, officially the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program. In addition, the UI library school is considering a new course of study in digital libraries and the project promises to dovetail nicely with it, Unsworth said.

Moreover, the test repositories for the project are going to be stocked with materials from a number of state libraries, including the Illinois State Library, along with the UI Division of Management Information and WILL radio and TV.

"They're the people who actually need this problem to be solved," Unsworth said. "We could see this was a good opportunity."

The Tufts University Perseus Project, a digital archive of classical humanities materials, and the Michigan State University Library also are involved.

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"Tell the truth and don't be afraid."

SPORTS ♦ Offseason training on the court: page 12

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Eastern Illinois University, Charleston

Booth wins CDs in lawsuit

Library gets 205 titles

BY STACY SMITH
STAFF WRITER

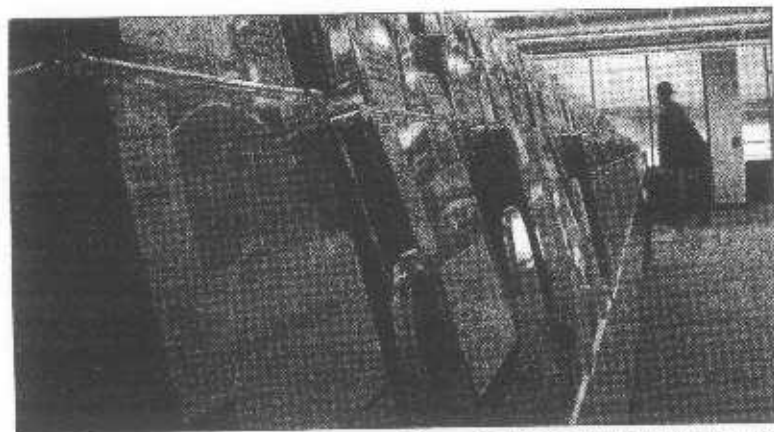
On Sept. 16 Eastern became one of the many schools in the nation to receive free CDs. Booth Library received 205 CDs varying from R&B, pop, soundtracks, opera, Latin, classical, European pop, hits from the 70s and 80s and more. There are about 30 CDs already available to be checked out, and the rest should be accessible within the next month.

Allen Lanham, dean of Booth Library services, thinks

the CDs greatly benefit Eastern and "enrich the variety of music held in Booth Library for student and faculty use."

According to Karen Wilkinson, the communications manager for the Lincoln Trail Libraries System, the CDs became available after the settlement of a lawsuit filed in August 2000 against Bertelsman Music Group, EMI Music Distribution, the Warner Elektra-Atlantic Corporation, Sony Music Entertainment and the Universal Music Group, Trans World Entertainment, Tower Records and Musicland.

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COLIN McAULIFFE/THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

About 30 of the compact discs Booth Library won in a recently settled lawsuit are available to be checked out. The lawsuit gave \$76.7 million worth of CDs to libraries, schools, government organizations and non-profit groups in 43 states.

BOOTH:

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Retailers signed a contract clearly stating to keep CDs at a certain price and broke the agreement by overcharging consumers. The companies agreed to distribute \$75.7 million worth of CDs to libraries, schools, government organizations and non-profit groups throughout the 43 states that were overcharged. Illinois received 243,500 free CDs during the giveaway, Wilkinson said.

Wilkinson also said that \$67.4 million would be refunded to those who purchased the CDs between 1995 to 2000 and discharge any policies that set a minimum price for advertised CDs and the \$75.7 million was equally divided between the 43 states based upon population and regions.

Lanham said the CDs are nice to have and would not have been purchased by library funds. He said many of the CDs that were previously available were for academic use and only few others were for entertainment.

Audrey Yosko, a graduate student majoring in dietetics, thinks having CDs in the library is a wonderful offer. Yosko said she listens to a wide variety of music and numerous CDs. She thinks the lawsuit is beneficial to Eastern because it may help prevent students from illegally downloading music and help students get what they need for their classes. She also said it would be good for entertainment purposes.

Nick DiGiulio, a senior industrial technology major, said the lawsuit is "good because if we got screwed we should be reimbursed."

Kids can vote for favorite books at St. Joseph Library

Children from preschool through eighth grade can cast their ballot for book favorites at the St. Joseph Township-Swearingen Memorial Library.

The program began Monday, Oct. 11 and will end Friday, Oct. 29. Kids do not need a library card to cast a ballot. "Kids Vote 2004" is a free election activity for area children. Results will be posted in the library beginning Monday, Nov. 1.

Preschool through second graders will choose their favorite book character. They may vote for one of these candidates:

Clifford, Berenstain Bears, Bob the Builder, Dora the Explorer, Blue & Magenta, Winnie the Pooh, Curious George, Pandy, Pikachu, Arthur & D.W., Pinky & Rex, Max & Ruby, Cam Jansen, Henry & Mudge, Nate the Great, Amelia Bedelia, Junie B. Jones, and Minnie & Moo.

Students in third through eighth grades will vote on their favorite series, as well as their favorite author and favorite book. The candidates for "Favorite Series" are: Boxcar Children, Arthur, Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, American Girl, Dear America/Royal Diaries, Captain Underpants, Cam Jansen, Animal Ark, Little House on the Prairie, Redwall, Harry Potter, Spiderwick Chronicles, Series of Unfortunate Events, Bailey School Kids, Goosebumps, Babysitters Club, Magic Tree House, Saddle Club, Pokemon, and MaryKate & Ashley.

For more information about "Kids Vote 2004," call the St. Joseph Library at 469-2159. Library hours are: Monday and Wednesday, 3 to 8 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday, 1 to 7 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WORD

The Last

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Chat with a Librarian: Live, Online Reference Service Starts



Now you can have the convenience of asking a librarian a question online and getting a response right away. It's the new "Chat with a Librarian" reference service, made possible through the efforts of local libraries and Lincoln Trail Libraries System.

How Chat Reference Works

When you send a question by chat, you'll get an online response as soon as the librarian gets your message. Then you and the librarian can send messages back and forth until you get the answers you need.

Several nearby libraries will

provide staff for the service. Chat reference is available weekdays from 10 a.m. to noon, and twelve additional hours during the week (no Sunday hours). Champaign staff are on chat duty Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m. As use of the service grows, the plan is to expand the hours of operation. The complete current schedule is:

Mon. 10 – 12, 4:30 – 7:30
Tue. 10 – 12
Wed. 10 – 1:30, 6:30 – 8:30
Thu. 10 – 12, 3 – 5:30
Fri. 10 – 12
Sat. 1 – 4

To ask your question, start at the "Chat with a Librarian" link at the bottom of any page on our Web site, www.champaign.org. ➡

Champaign Public
 LIBRARY

505 South Randolph Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820-5193