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ILS655 Assignment-Digital Library Project Review Paper 02

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library / Digital Archives

1. Background

The Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Library is the first U.S. presidential library. It was built under President Roosevelt's direction and opened in 1941. The library's mission is "to foster research and education on the life and times of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and their continuing impact on contemporary life." ("About," 2011) The FDR Library and Museum is a federal agency, administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). As such, it is partially funded by federal tax dollars. Additional funding comes from admissions fees, the museum store, private contributions and a public-private partnership with the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, a non-profit corporation ("Financial," 2011).

The FDR Library partnered with Marist College and IBM in the 1990's to develop the FDR Digital Archives. It was the first presidential library to undertake a massive digitization project. The Digital Archives includes only a portion of the library's total holdings but digitization is an ongoing effort. So far, several thousand documents, historical photographs and audio/video clips have been digitized ("Plan," 2011). These collections are for researchers, teachers, students and the general public. The FDR Library's Website is administered by Marist College. The URL is http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu .

2. Organization of Resources

The FDR Library is the repository for the personal and public papers of President Roosevelt, as well as the papers of Eleanor Roosevelt and those of friends and associates. The collection includes over 17 million pages of documents, 150,000 audiovisual items, and 50,000 books ("About," 2011). The FDR Digital Archives contains over 13,000 documents, 2,000 photographs and a selection of audio/video clips. The two major document collections are the President's

Secretary's File (PSF) collection and the Hackett Papers. The PSF collection, which accounts for the majority of digitized documents, contains:

- The Safe Files (papers, dating from 1933-1945, that had been kept locked in the FDR's White House safe)
- The Diplomatic Files (Vatican Files, German and British Diplomatic Files)

The Hackett Papers are mainly records of correspondence between FDR and his lawyer ("Digitized," 2011).

The Safe File documents are organized into six virtual boxes, as shown below. Each box includes an index and summary of the folders it contains. At the next level, each folder includes an index of the documents it contains. Likewise, each of the Diplomatic Files (i.e., Vatican, German, British) and the Hackett Papers is organized into a series of folders, each one having an index. Document metadata includes address (URL), file type, size, date modified, encoding and additional information. Meta tags include audience, owner, keywords, publisher, content-type and description information.
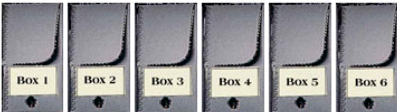
Digitized historical photographs are organized into three categories:

- Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt

- The Great Depression and New Deal

- World War II

All photographs are in the public domain. Photograph metadata includes library number, date and title information. Audio/video clips are limited and essentially provide either brief sound bites or portions of videos from the Audio/Visual Collections of the FDR Library.

Another of the FDR Library's digitization initiatives is *Day by Day*, a calendar of President Roosevelt's activities in the White House. "Using a topical database compiled by documentary film-maker, Pare Lorentz as the basic framework, the Roosevelt Library has enriched Lorentz' original text by linking digitized documents, appointment calendars, photographs, speeches, audio and film drawn from its extensive holdings." ("What," 2011) The first part of this project is funded by a grant from the New York Community Trust through the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute.

3. Service Features

Visitors to the FDR Library's Website can easily access the Digital Archives by clicking on the "Digitized Collections" link on the homepage.   This takes the user to the "Search Our Collections" page with further links to digitized documents, photographs and audio/video clips. The collections can be browsed by following these links or keyword-searched via the Website's search interface, which is shown below.   This is an example of a keyword search with results sorted by relevancy score. Results can also be sorted by time and title.

Search results for 'anna and roosevelt'

Match: All ▾ Format: Long ▾ Sort by: Score ▾
Refine search: Anna Roosevelt [Search]

Documents 1 - 10 of 64 matches. More ☆'s indicate a better match.

[A902AL04.TXT]☆☆☆☆
Fifth–I further report the amount of exemptions allowed under 249-q to be: BENEFICIARIES Relationship $ Amount of Exemption **Anna** Eleanor **Roosevelt** Widow 20,000.00 **Anna Roosevelt** Boettiger Daughter 5,000.00 James **Roosevelt** Son 5,000.00 Elliott **Roosevelt** Son 5,000.00 Franklin D, **Roosevelt**, Jr. Son 5,000 . . .
http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/PSF/BOX21/A902AL04.TXT 08/15/02, 1730 bytes

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum - "I Want You to Write Me" ☆☆☆☆
Franklin D. **Roosevelt** Presidential Library and Museum "I Want You to Write to Me": The Papers of **Anna** Eleanor **Roosevelt** by Frances M. Seeber Summer 1987 issue of Prologue In August 1933 Mrs. Franklin D. **Roosevelt** wrote a short article for her page in Woman's Home Companion . It was titled simply: "I . . .
http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/ERPROLOG.HTML 07/14/09, 38339 bytes

Content summaries of collections and documents are helpful finding aids. Documents can easily be viewed as either original scanned images or transcribed text.

4. Technologies

The technology behind the FDR Digital Archives was developed in collaboration with Marist College and IBM. The digital library was built using an IBM DB2 Universal Database. It is based on an extensive client/server architecture on top of Marist's IBM ZSeries eServer ("IBM," 2001). A Mandarin M3 OPAC provides the user interface for author, title and subject searches of the library's book collection.

The FDR Digital Archives can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection and a Web browser. Links within the FDR Library Website provide connections to the various digital collections and facilitate browsing. The Website search interface also serves as the search interface for the Digital Archives. Digitized photographs are stored in GIF format. Documents are stored in both JPEG and html formats. Interoperability is aided by the use of IS0

(International Organization for Standardization)-8859-1 encoding technology, which extends ASCII for Western European languages. Each document and image has a unique URL address utilizing hypertext transfer protocol (e.g., http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/images/photodb/09-2051a.gif). Audio clips are stored as .rm files and open using *RealPlayer*. Video clips, hosted by YouTube, open with Adobe Flash Player.

5. Comments

This FDR Digital Archives is a work in progress, given the enormous amount of content yet to be digitized. Based on what has been accomplished so far, I found the digital collections well-organized and reasonably straightforward to access and use. The features of the library are fairly simple but adequate to provide access to the wealth of information in these collections. I thought that one weakness was dependence on the Website's search interface, which offers few searching options and no help in explaining the difference between terms such as ANY/ALL and LONG/SHORT. This lead to some trial and error searches before understanding these search options. Navigating through the levels of hierarchical detail to browse the collections was, for the most part, intuitive and the process was aided by the content summaries. The multi-media aspect of the digital library really helps to bring history to life and is one of the project's strengths. Listening to FDR tell the country "There is nothing to fear but fear itself" conveys meaning beyond words on a page. I also appreciated being able to view original scanned images of documents as well as the transcribed text. These images really help to place the documents in historical context.   Overall, I enjoyed exploring the FDR Digital Archives and I look forward to watching this project evolve.

References

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