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ILS 655 Assignment-Digital Library Project Review Paper 02
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Tufts Digital Library

The purpose of the assignment was to select and study a digital library. After browsing through the list of digital libraries, I decided to review the Tufts Digital Library (TDL) and improve my knowledge about its background, organization of resources stored in digital formats and accessible by computers, service features, and implicated technologies.

Project Background

The Tufts Digital Library collections which harness technology and innovation to support teaching and research at the Tufts University, can be accessed at http://dl.tufts.edu/ The following screen shot presents the Tufts Digital Library homepage.

The Tufts Digital Library is managed and preserved by the Digital Collections and Archives (DCA). The library was developed in partnership with University Information Technology, Academic Technology. The collection archives support teaching and the research mission of Tufts University, and were established in 1964. According to the history of the Tufts Digital Library, "Since 2003, DCA and AT have collaborated on the implementation of the Tufts Digital Library, a digital preservation system based on the Fedora Commons Repository architecture" (Tufts Digital Library). Since then, "The Tufts Digital Library is a centrally-managed preservation and access system for digital content of enduring value created at Tufts and/or by members of the Tufts community, its affiliates, and allied organizations" (Tufts Digital Library).

Organization of Resources and Services

The Tufts Digital Library homepage contains information in a language that can be easily read and understood. The homepage is divided into three main sections. A welcome section is located in the center of the homepage. Below the welcome section, an announcement sector introduces library users to up-to-date events and recent changes that were applied to the library. On the left side of the homepage, a visually appealing and easy to explore and navigate search box allows users to specify resources to images, text, data sets, audio, collection guides, and people and offices. Moreover, by selecting the advanced search option, users are able to sort their findings by creator, collection, date, description, organizations, people, places, topics, title and type. The advanced search interface "offers patrons the ability to apply up to three metadata filters, to choosing from 11 categories of information types, to their searches in order to refine and constrain a full text search" (Tufts Digital Library). It is worth to mention that users who face difficulties

searching for resources can access a search help that will introduce them to three search options available for the Tufts Digital Library.

In their book <u>Digital Libraries: Principles and Practice in a Global Environment</u>, Lucy Tedd and Andrew Large define "the interface will play a vital role in determining whether or not a visit to the digital library is success or failure, both in terms of the information retrieved and the user's overall level of satisfaction with the experience" (pg. 129). As a first time user of the Tufts Digital Library, I decided to test the catalog using a relatively simple search, and paid attention to all characteristics that give it a distinctive feel. I searched for resources about ancient civilizations. I did not have to wait long for 9 pages of results to appear on my computer screen, and I was able to access some of the full text articles with no problem. As I opened retrieved text documents, I was able to see the title, citable URL, creator, date and format. When I opened an image, I could see the title, date, format, citable URL, photographer or illustrator, and citation. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that documents were available in Portable Document Format **(PDF),** while images were available in the Tagged Image File Format, abbreviated as TIFF. As I researched deeper, I realized that I can control how many records per page I would like to retrieve. Users who believe that 50 results on one page make a page look too busy, can set a limit of 25 or 10 resources presented on each page. However, I also recognized that I am not able to see the exact number of retrieved resources that matched my search terms.
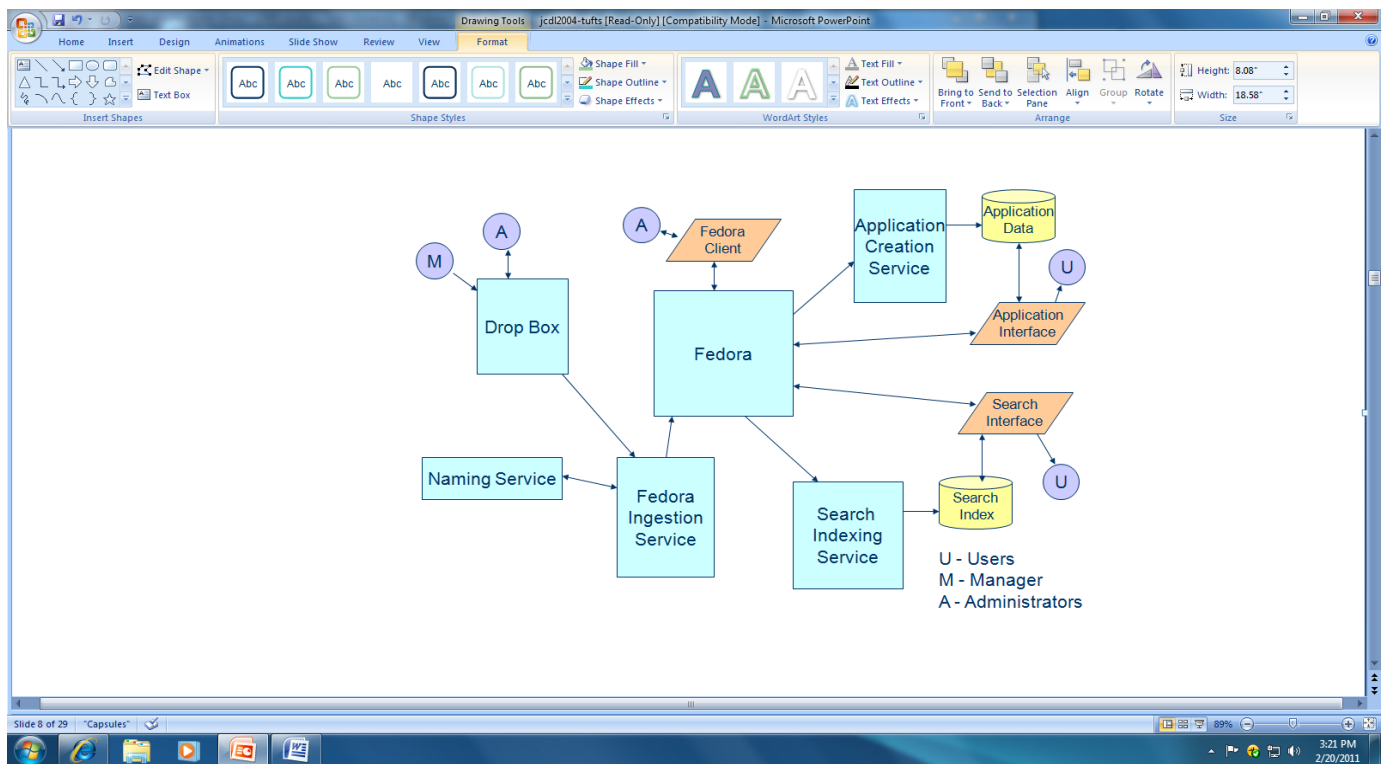
After conducting further research of the resources available in the Tuft Digital Library, I realized that the library provides access to growing digital collections and archives designed to support learning, teaching and research services at Tufts University. Currently, they hold more than

4,300 cubic feet of records, and university and student publications from Tufts University. Moreover, patrons can access holdings in environmental studies, theater history, international affairs, broadcast history and literature. In addition, Tufts Digital Library provides access to numerous digital images; for example: Melville S. Munro's photographs documenting Tufts, World War I through World War II; Edwin B. Rollins' photographs documenting buildings on the Medford campus; P.T. Barnum papers including images of Jumbo and Barnum Hall; Tom Hart photographs depicting campus and student life in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s; Jackson College photographs portraying students, activities, and events, Department of Athletics images portraying games and athletes; Facilities Management photos portraying buildings; architectural drawings and construction on the Medford campus and Activities and Organizations photographs portraying Tufts activities and organizations (Tufts Digital Library). In addition, the library collection holds an alphabetically arranged encyclopedia of Tufts history that contains information about Tufts' achievements and social contributions.

Technologies

In order to meet users' expectations, the Tufts Digital Library provides long-term maintenance of all resources and tries to rely on innovation, collaboration, and sharing. For example, modern advanced image viewer, TDL Java Applet allows users to zoom in and out of images by clicking on any part of image, while basic image viewer allows users to see low resolution pictures. Also noteworthy is that most images available through the Tufts Digital Library catalog can be retrieved using full text searching, while some documents "provided as images (PDSs, etc.) may include hidden transcriptions and will provide results in a full text search" (Tufts Digital Library). In addition, a majority of text documents are discoverable using full text searching

and metadata searching. Currently, the Tufts Digital Library is using the metadata and text

document structuring schemes such as METS, Dublin Core, EAD and TEI. Furthermore,

my additional research and investigation of the Tufts Digital Library helped me finding that

since 2003 DCA and AT have worked together on the implementation of the Tufts Digital Library,

"a digital preservation system based on the Fedora Commons Repository architecture" (Tufts

Digital Library).

Comments

The Tufts Digital Library is very clear and comprehensive. All resources are easily

accessible and the Library interface provides useful and innovative metadata and full-text

searching tools to access resources. As a first time user I was satisfied with the quality and

availability of resources for anyone who is willing to retrieve information through TDL. In addition, the TDL glossary that provides specific definitions appears to be very useful for patrons who are looking to improve their knowledge and understanding of terms used throughout Tufts Digital Library.

References

Large, A., Tedd, L.A. (2005). *Digital Libraries: Principles and Practice in a Global Environment.*

Germany: K.G. Saur Verlag Munchen.

Tufts Digital Library. Retrieved from http://dl.tufts.edu/