



Not Quite Crowdsourcing; Or, A Volunteer Program in Three Acts

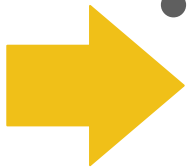
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Act One: Setting the Scene

Digitization partnerships: free as in kittens, not beer

Let me start by saying that digitization partnerships are great!
But having parts of your collection scanned free-of-cost isn't *really* free.

- Logistics (space, staff, equipment, security, etc.)
- Contracts, embargo periods, e-commerce
- Backing up and preserving scans, creating (or repurposing) indexes, creating a path to access for patrons



We needed extra hours in the day to do something useful with the influx of raw scans.

Act Two: The Cockamamy Scheme

Enter our Volunteers and Interns Department

- Working with collections is one of the most commonly requested positions
 - Most supervisors need special qualifications for collections work
 - I needed people who had basic computer skills and attention to detail
- They set me up with an experienced volunteer who could help me with a pilot run
- We used what we already had available to us (software, workstations, external hard drives)

Act Two: The Cockamamy Scheme

Together we developed a no-fuss process

- Volunteers go through scans to group them and convert them to access formats (1 record = 1 digital file)
- They index the record from scratch *or* check the record against the existing index and send corrections to me
- I periodically back up their finished work to a separate hard drive
- Once all the access files are made, the pile gets shuffled around and volunteers spot-check each other's work and send corrections to me
- After all the corrections are made, the web team adds the index and files to MNPRS

Act Two-and-a-Half: Hijinks Ensnue!

Things still aren't free as in beer...but they're closer

- Volunteer training and orientation: ~1 hour their first day
- Documentation needs updating for each record set
- My responsibilities to my volunteers
 - Have work needs to be ready and waiting
 - Be flexible and empathetic to volunteers' needs
 - Be available for questions, for chatting
 - Be upfront and realistic about my expectations
(accuracy over speed, bring some podcasts/tunes)
- Make it a rewarding experience (celebrate milestones, give behind-the-scenes looks, encourage deep-dives into material) to win volunteer loyalty

Act Three: Conclusion and Evolution

First the Gold Star Roll, Then...THE WORLD!

Okay, not the world. But we are moving on to other records sets with different (more complex) needs

- Process improvement based on volunteer feedback
- Digital objects headed for Finding Aids (not MNPRS)
- Plug-and-Play Indexing Rules
- Volunteer-from-Home system for experienced volunteers (snowbirds, trips to the cabin, etc.)
- Perhaps, eventually, a traditional crowdsourcing platform

Thank you!

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