The Power of Collaboration: Digitization of State Medical Society Journals 1900 – 2000
The University of Maryland, Baltimore's Experience

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Importance of Medical Society Journals

State medical society journals document the transformation of American medicine in the twentieth century at both the local and national level. Content may include:

- Clinical articles
- Medical discussions
- Features chronicling each state's medical history often with photographs and portraits
- Musings on medicine and society
- State medical society annual conference information and photographs
- Advertisements

The Medical Heritage Library and the NEH

The Medical Heritage Library (MHL), a digital curation collaborative among some of the world's leading medical libraries, promotes free and open access to quality historical resources in medicine. They applied for and received a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant to digitize state medical society journals.

The goal

Digitize 117 titles from 48 states, from 1900-2000 making the content fully searchable, preserved, and freely available through the Medical Heritage Library (MHL) collection in the Internet Archive (IA).

The Collaborators

The Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard University (HU) was the applicant/grantee on behalf of the MHL. The following libraries were included as collaborators:

Library of the Center for the History of Medicine and Public Health at the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM)
The Historical Medical Library, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia (CPP)
The Health Sciences and Human Services Library, University of Maryland, Baltimore(UMB)
University of California at San Francisco (UCSF)

Internet Archive https://archive.org/details/statemedicalsocietyjournals
Medical Heritage Library http://www.medicalheritage.org/
UMB Digital Archive http://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/4858

University of Maryland
Health Sciences and Human Services Library

The UMB Experience

Why the HSHSL was approached to participate

- HSHSL was already a content contributor to MHL
- HSHSL had a significant collection of medical society journals

Collaboration Responsibilities

MHL

- Obtained copyright clearance for journals
- Hosted virtual weekly meetings of all collaborators to discuss issues and provide updates
- Organized all participants' journals/volumes information in Google Docs
- Assigned and re-assigned journal volumes to each institution
- Facilitated discussions to promote consistency of metadata
- Arranged for editing permissions within the Internet Archive (IA)

HSHSL

- Assessed condition of all volumes of state medical society journals owned by HSHSL for possible digitization; Used print form created for project (checked for missing pages, narrow margins, torn pages, fold outs, etc.)
- Reported findings of assessment by entering data into Google Docs
- Entered metadata of assigned journals into spreadsheets that accompanied volumes sent to Internet Archive (IA) for digitization
- Worked with IA for quality assurance
- Performed quality control in-house post-digitization
- Edited metadata as needed

Staffing

- Initial data collectors – staff from throughout the library participated (4 faculty librarians, 10 staff members)
- Project manager – (faculty librarian)
- Metadata librarians – (2 faculty librarians)
- Quality control checkers – (2 faculty librarians and 1 staff member)

HSHSL contributed 665 volumes to the project

Lessons Learned

Collaborators are important – the MHL group was great! We were in it together!
Journals are challenging – name changes, binding issues (sections missing, issues out of order, advertisements stripped)
Good communication is essential
The unexpected happens – issue with lost data in Google Docs
Paper documentation of initial assessment invaluable
Lots of work but worth the effort!