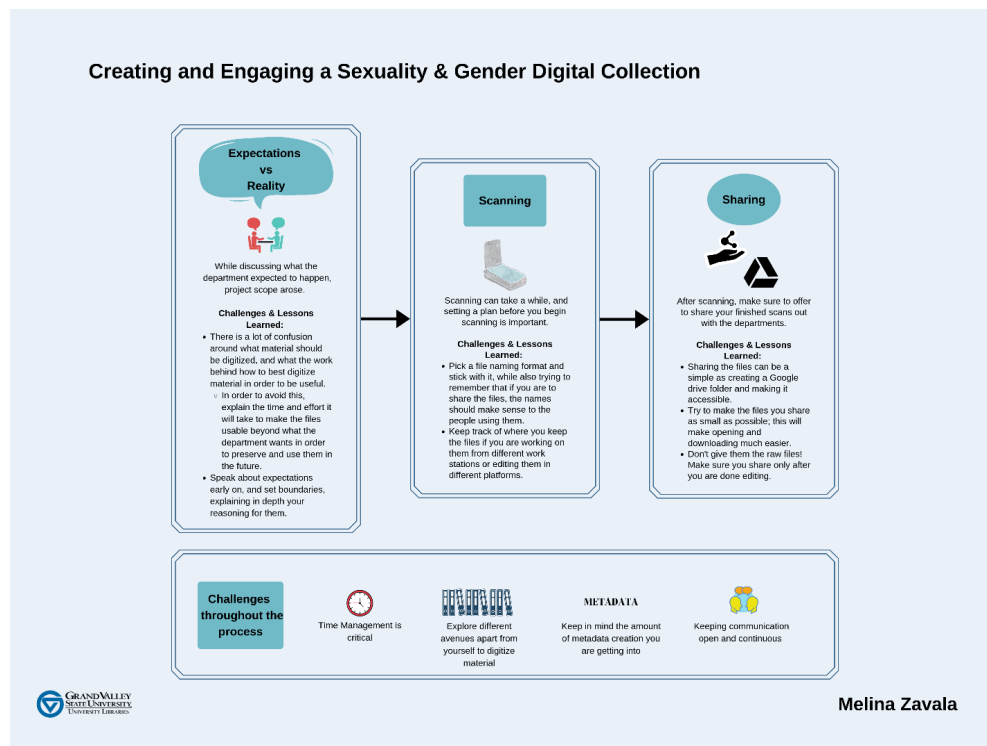# CREATING AND ENGAGING A SEXUALITY & GENDER DIGITAL COLLECTION

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This was originally a poster outlining my process in attempting to create a digital collection using material from different departments other than my own. I discuss themes observed as well as challenges and lessons learned. You can find the poster in the Grand Valley State University Scholarworks@GVSU repository.

Abstract

As a queer early career librarian, coming into the digital collections space at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) and not being able to see a very important part of myself reflected within the digital collection spurred me to think about ways in which I could make people like me more visible within it. Thus, for one of my early projects as the new Digital Scholarship Librarian at GVSU, I digitized the event archives from the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department, the Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center, and the Gayle R. Davis Center for Women and Gender Equity. With this material I planned to create a sexuality and gender digital collection, with multiple objectives: to include a queer perspective within the digital collections, to raise awareness of what these physical places offer students within the digital space, and to allow easier access to the archives with the hopes of attracting people who may not have been looking specifically at what physical archives have to offer. I want the digital to break through to the physical and encourage people to go to the events and classes offered by the centers and the department. I also want to encourage students as well as people outside of academia to develop an interest working with archives in different ways. There is a need for more varied voices within the library profession as a whole and increasing access to archival material can create interest for more LGBTQ+ people to professionally work in libraries. This project is one way I hope to spark interest in future librarians and archivists. The poster will outline the overall process this project took and highlight the challenges and the lessons learned. Attendees will walk away with tools to start their own conversations and create digital collections alongside different departments, learn the benefits and drawbacks of working with different departments in an archival project which makes underrepresented communities more visible, and take a closer look at how a digital collection is made at Grand Valley State University.

Expectations vs. Reality

While discussing what the department expected to happen, project scope arose.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

- There is a lot of confusion around what material should be digitized, and what the work behind how to best digitize material in order to be useful.
    - o In order to avoid this, explain the time and effort it will take to make the files usable beyond what the department wants in order to preserve and use them in the future.
- Speak about expectations early on, and set boundaries, explaining in depth your reasoning for them

Scanning

Scanning can take a while and setting a plan before you begin scanning is important.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

- Pick a file naming format and stick with it, while also trying to remember that if you are to share the files, the names should make sense to the people using them.
- Keep track of where you keep the files if you are working on them from different work stations or editing them in different platforms.

Sharing

After scanning, make sure to offer to share your finished scans out with the departments.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

- Sharing the files can be as simple as creating a Google drive folder and making it accessible.
- Try to make the files you share as small as possible; this will make opening and downloading much easier.
- Don't give them the raw files! Make sure you share only after you are done editing.

Challenges & Lessons Learned throughout the process

- Time management is critical.
- Explore different avenues apart from yourself to digitize material.
- Keep in mind the amount of metadata creation you are getting into.
- Keeping communication open and continuous.