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>
> Anthony Halstead
> Assistant Director of Library Services & Community Outreach

Case Study

NAPA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA

INDUSTRY
- Libraries

LOCATION
- Napa, California

CHALLENGES
- Staff did not have the time to index the newspapers
- Difficult for patrons to find articles on microfilm unless you were familiar with the archive
- Newspapers on microfilm limited patron access to the physical building

BMI PRODUCTS & SERVICES
- 1,200 microfilm rolls digitally scanned at BMI's Sunnyvale conversion facility
- Digital microfilm rolls hosted at BMI's synced data centers
- A custom Digital ReeL web portal was created to match Napa County Library's web-site

BENEFITS
- Custom online portal that is consistent with Napa County web-site
- Users from all over the world access digital newspaper articles and photos from the web
- 45,000+ image requests per month from users all over the world

Overview

Napa County Library's mission is to enrich peoples' lives with books and information. The County serves a population of 135,000 and offers four libraries that provide public computers, printing, wireless internet access, entertainment and informational programs, and a wide assortment of other materials tailored to community interests.

The Napa Valley County Library provides newspaper archives for the *Napa Valley Register* and the *Weekly Calistogan*. In the past, the County received print copies of the newspapers, microfilmed the copies, and then offered a microfilm archive to patrons for newspaper research.

The library staff hand-indexed the papers and would leverage a card catalog for search and retrieval. Over time, this became burdensome and, combined with the hassles common with microfilm, led the County to search for a digital solution.

After issuing a Request for Proposal, the Library selected Digital ReeL because of the range of benefits it would provide and its competitive price. The Digital ReeL platform hosts the Library's digital newspaper records at BMI's datacenter and offers a custom, Napa-branded online portal for patrons searching the newspaper archives.

The Search for a Better Solution

Anthony Halstead, Assistant Director of Library Services & Community Outreach, states, "The challenges we had with our microfilm archive were well known. When a local resident granted money to the library, we decided to issue an RFP and look at digital conversion options."

The Library staff researched issues that could arise during a digital conversion project, and received approval from the County to proceed. Additionally, the Library was granted permission by the newspaper's publisher to offer access to the records at the Library and on the web.

Halstead: "Digital ReeL's hosting platform enables us to offer our patrons a web-ready solution where they can access our newspaper archives from anywhere."

Hosting & Custom Web Portal

BMI Imaging not only digitally scanned all 1,200 microfilm rolls, but also uploaded the digital records to its secure data center.

"We did not want a system that required heavy IT involvement," Halstead says. "BMI offered a full service solution that included scanning, image processing, and web hosting; this made the experience a lot easier on our staff."

Additionally, BMI customized the Digital ReeL interface to reflect the Napa County brand. Halstead continues, "There is continuity with the Library web site and the Digital ReeL interface. Patrons feel like they are in the right place when accessing our film archive through Digital ReeL."

Newspaper Articles & Photos Accessed All Over the World

Not every publisher grants permission to provide online access to its records. In the case of Napa County Library, the key newspapers had a common publisher that decided to enable the Library to provide online access.

Halstead exclaims, "We've been pleasantly surprised with the number of people accessing our records online. In the past, this newspaper archive was only available at our physical location. Since January (2016), we've averaged 45,000+ image requests per month and users are from all over the world."

Elimination of Physical Microfilm Repository

It is not uncommon for libraries to retain access to a physical microfilm archive after a digital alternative is presented.

Regular patrons and staff may be used to the physical microfilm and prefer the ability to browse back and forth and enjoy the serendipity that sometimes results.

One of the real testaments to the Digital ReeL solution is that staff and common patrons no longer use the physical microfilm. Halstead states, "Staff and patrons approved the retirement of the physical archive because Digital ReeL offers a better experience. The ability to browse a digital roll and quickly locate articles and photos has been well received."

Additionally, future issues of the newspapers will be scanned and uploaded to Digital ReeL direct from hard copy. This will allow continuity of the local history on a go-forward basis.

Lessons Learned for Libraries Considering a Similar Project

Halstead concludes, "We learned a lot about a newspaper microfilm digital scanning project. I would recommend libraries consider the archive and whether you will add new content to it or if it is a static archive. If you are a County Library, think locally. There may be an opportunity to add other County municipalities that have legacy newspapers."