

"We selected Digital Reel because the staff time required was minimal and BMI helped point us in the right direction to resolve the issues that usually come up with a newspaper scanning project."

Christine Mendoza
Supervising Librarian
Sunnyvale Public Library



Case Study

INDUSTRY

- Local Government - Libraries

LOCATION

- Sunnyvale, California

CHALLENGES

- Too much staff time helping patrons locate information in the historical newspaper microfilm archive
- Inability to find information relevant to a particular search
- Crumbling and deteriorating paper and microfilm threatened the longevity of the newspaper archive

BMI PRODUCTS & SERVICES

- Microfilm conversion at BMI facility
- Digital Reel online search and retrieval application
- Hosted application with integration on Sunnyvale Public Library website

BENEFITS

- Fast search and retrieval cuts staff time required to help patrons retrieve information from historical newspaper archive
- Online access to newspaper archive enables patrons to search and retrieve anywhere at anytime



Sunnyvale Public Library

Overview

Each year, the Sunnyvale Public Library receives more than 750,000 visitors who check out over 2 million items. With such a busy environment staff is always looking for ways to improve productivity.

The historical Sunnyvale newspaper archive, dating back to 1906, was mostly on microfilm (some on old print). It required a significant amount of staff time to help patrons research the archive. In addition, the print paper was starting to deteriorate. Because of this, a desire grew to digitally convert the archive with the purpose of making the records easily searchable and preserving them long into the future.

Christine Mendoza, Supervising Librarian, states "We had very little experience with digitizing newspapers. Initially, we thought doing the scanning ourselves might be an option but it soon became apparent that it would require too much staff involvement. We found BMI's Digital Reel to be a cost-effective solution; BMI helped us resolve the issues that normally come up with a newspaper scanning project."

A Common Challenge for Newspaper Scanning Projects: Public Access & Copyright

Mendoza states, "When we decided to move forward with the newspaper digitization project, we did not have publisher permission to scan the Sunnyvale historical newspapers. We worked with our City attorney and it was determined that anything prior to 1963 could be put on our web-site and made available. Anything after 1963 was to be digitized and accessible only within our library."

BMI worked with Sunnyvale to provide two distinct datasets, one available to the general public on the Sunnyvale website and the other accessible within the physical Sunnyvale Public Library only.

Historical Newspaper Now Available Online

Today, the Sunnyvale historical newspaper archive is available online with Digital Reel. Newspapers include the *Standard Register Leader*, the *Sunnyvale Daily Standard*, the *Valley Journal*, *West Valley Times*, and more.

Mendoza: "Newspapers published prior to 1963 are available anywhere from our website. The entire collection is available at the library. Staff and patrons now use full text searching to find articles, historical documents, and photos. They can turn grainy black and white images into lifelike photos with image enhancement features."

The ability to research the newspaper archive from the website has been well received by the public. Since posting the newspaper archive in May 2016, the Library is receiving an average of 1,400 image requests per month.

Fast Search & Retrieval Saves Time

Mendoza states, "We're able to significantly cut staff time for certain requests." For example, a new park and

softball diamond was about to be christened and a patron was curious to learn the history behind how the other seven Sunnyvale parks were named.

"Using Digital Reel, we were able to do a full text search across the historical newspaper archive using the name of each park. Within 5 minutes, we identified several great articles with valuable information. This would not have been possible before our microfilm was digitized."

Overall, it's easy for patrons and staff to type key words into the interface. Google-like result sets appear and each key word is highlighted in yellow, making it easy to browse through the results.

Maintaining the Newspaper Context Offers Chances of Serendipity

One of the unique features of Digital Reel is that the individual microfilm roll is scanned in its entirety. The newspaper is digitally converted just as it appears in physical format. As a result, it's easy to navigate back and forth once a particular article of interest is located.

Mendoza states, "A patron may be conducting research on a local business in Sunnyvale. They can find an article using a key word search and also scan the full newspaper to see the accompanying ads that were running at the time. It opens up new data points that are useful to that researcher."

Conclusion

The Library has digitized its entire microfilm archive of local titles, but may add more historic records in the future, such as old photos of the library building during construction, and is likely to add them to the archive.