



NBC 5/KXAS (WBAP) Television News Collection Digitization Project Proposal

By: Hannah Wallis

Potential Sponsor: <https://knightfoundation.org>

Memorandum

To: Paul Cheung
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Suite 3300
200 S. Biscayne Blvd.
Miami, FL 33131-2349
From: Hannah Wallis
Date: October 13, 2019
Subject: Letter of Inquiry to Digitize Texas History

Dear Paul Cheung,

I greatly appreciate you taking the time to read this letter. The Knight Foundation's mission to invest in journalism, the arts, and communities is truly inspirational. You giving to others, so they have the opportunity to pursue their passions is heartening. My proposal fits into your mission as it focuses on helping UNT Libraries digitize the NBC 5/KXAS (WBAP) Television News Collection. UNT Libraries simply do not have the funds to enhance their digitization process.

This project would be a great investment for the Knight Foundation as it aligns perfectly with your mission in the following areas:

- Investment in journalism, the arts, and communities
- Digitization of historical information
- Creation of an informed and engaged community

This collection needs to be digitized to preserve the history of communities and give the public access to their own news history. This would not only benefit Texas, but also communities all over the world as the collection contains news stories covered in Texas about major international events. With the funding of about \$150,000, UNT Libraries can buy more equipment and hire more employees to digitize this collection. This letter highlights the mission of this project, current situation, goals, benefits, and deliverables.

Mission Statement

I believe preserving history is of the utmost importance. Digitizing this collection would not only preserve Texas history, but also the history of journalism and the arts. The purpose of this project is to digitize the NBC 5/KXAS (WBAP) Television News Collection focusing mainly on the earlier years from 1940-1950 and the years from 1968-1970. These years are in risk of being ruined because the majority of the collection items are on old and fragile 16 mm film. All types of film are prone to damage after a certain number of years. According to the Preservation Self-Assessment Program, 16 mm film is prone to acetate breakdown, mold, and all forms of physical damage including tears, holes, scratches, and more. These films are fragile and the more damage they gain over the years, the more history is lost.

Current Situation

UNT Libraries is working on digitizing this collection; however, they simply do not have the time or resources to do so quickly. Because of this, precious items of history are being lost. The collection currently has 135,992 items uploaded to The Portal to Texas History. This collection is invaluable, and the pieces uploaded already have 1,485,990 uses (KXAS-NBC 5). The majority of the collection has not been digitized yet and needs to be digitized as soon as possible.

Project Goals

The project's goals consist of:

- Digitizing the years from 1940-1976
- Uploading quality images and videos of the items to the Portal to Texas History
- Providing summaries of each piece of history that is uploaded
- Creating a marketing strategy

This project would give the public and students at UNT access to resources needed to be aware of historical moments in recent history. If this project is completed, multiple communities would have access to historical videos, photographs, scripts, and more with information that they would not otherwise have. This would add to the awareness of events in the community and highlight the history of Texas. History is massively important as it allows communities to learn from the past and ultimately create a better future.

The collection does not simply benefit Texas alone. For example, the collection includes stations in Texas covering massive stories such as the bushfires in Melbourne, Australia that occurred in 1969 which, at the time of the script, killed 15 people, burned more than 100 homes, and ruined 100,000 acres of farmland (WBAP-TV, 1969). The collection is also more personal as they cover smaller incidents that are still incredibly important but focus specifically on a community in Texas. For example, the collection contains a video of the news covering an apartment fire in Fort Worth, Texas in 1958 that left 17 people homeless (WBAP-TV, 1958).

Journalists can study the collection to see how news has been given to the public over the different decades and understand how much communication has improved. They can also reference the collection in their works. History students can learn more through primary sources and use the contents of the collection in their own research. The collection benefits people on an individual level and the community as a whole.

Deliverables

The deliverables of the project include digitizing the current collection focusing on the earlier years and uploading them to The Portal to Texas History for the public.

The funds needed to make this possible would be used in various ways. The majority of the funds would be used to hire staff, buy equipment, including high-quality scanners, and send some film to be digitized by outside sources.

UNT Libraries needs more employees in order to not only digitize the collection, but also upload the information to The Portal to Texas History. Each piece of history that is uploaded must be evaluated for content. They need employees to watch each video and assess each script to understand its contents and then write a summary of the content to be uploaded with the primary source. This allows people to search for information in the portal and find all of the videos, photographs, and more related to the topic they searched for. This also gives people context as to what is in the video.

The main emphasis on this project is to digitize earlier content that is on fragile film as soon as possible. More funding would simply help digitize this information more effectively.

Thank you for all of the wonderful work your foundation does and for your consideration. If you have any further questions or would like to see a final proposal, please reach out to me.

Kind regards,

Hannah Wallis

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Introduction

The Knight Foundation's initiative to help organizations that invest in journalism, the arts, and communities is truly uplifting. This proposal sheds light as to not only how UNT Libraries' project of digitizing the NBC 5/KXAS Television News Collection aligns so closely with your foundation's goals but also how vastly important this project is.

UNT Libraries needs the funding of \$150,000 to hire more employees, buy more equipment, create a marketing plan, and send more items out for digitization by an outside source to preserve history by digitizing items which are currently on fragile film.

Situation

The new digital age we live in allows for the immortalization of priceless information and art. The NBC 5/KXAS (WBAP) Television News Collection is full of invaluable news footage, scripts, photographs, and more that need to be preserved through digitization as they contain information that could help foster an informed community. This collection spans several decades from 1940-2019 containing information on countless events that tremendously impacted the history of not only small counties in Texas, but also the world. This dated collection is on the brink of falling apart. The footage of the earlier years, the years from 1940-1976, is on old film that simply cannot withstand the test of time. History is being lost.

The earlier years of the collection are on old and fragile 16 mm film. All types of film are prone to damage after a certain number of years. According to the Preservation Self-Assessment Program, 16 mm film is prone to acetate breakdown, mold, and all forms of physical damage including tears, holes, scratches, and more. The tendency for old film to be ruined is a major advocate as to not only the pure fact that this needs to be done, but also the fact that it needs to be done quickly.

UNT Libraries is working on digitizing this collection; however, they simply do not have the time or resources to do so quickly. Because of this, precious items of history are being lost. The majority of the collection has not been digitized yet and needs to be digitized as soon as possible.

Digitization of the Arts

Technology has massively evolved over the ages, because of this we have new means to preserve history and art. The digitization of the arts has been an incredible movement made by many universities, museums, libraries, and more. The Washington University Libraries digitized their collection of Miles's documentary series with sets of interviews from 1986 (Kelley, 2019). The Princeton University Art Museum brings an excellent photograph collection to life through digitizing White's photographs (Firestone, 2016).

The movement to save history before it is ruined is also collaborative as many people care about this issue. For example, Indiana University's Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative includes many projects to not only preserve history but also spread awareness and help other communities. They posted an article which included data and information from their own massive digitization project (Nickel, 2019). Their statistics from their projects, along with pitfalls and problems they ran into, help others who are digitizing collections plan their own project and look ahead to prevent unnecessary issues from occurring.

The NBC 5/KXAS (WBAP) Television News Collection

The collection currently has 135,992 items uploaded to The Portal to Texas History. The collection contains five different types of items consisting of scripts, videos, photographs, texts, and books. This collection is invaluable, and the pieces uploaded already have 1,485,990 uses (KXAS-NBC 5).

The collection does not simply benefit Texas alone. The collection includes stations in Texas covering massive stories that impacted multiple areas. Scripts from the bushfires in Melbourne,

Australia that occurred in 1969 which, at the time of the script, killed 15 people, burned more than 100 homes, and ruined 100,000 acres of farmland are in the collection (WBAP-TV, 1969).

The collection also contains items covering particular events in specific communities in Texas. For example, the collection contains a video of the news covering an apartment fire in Fort Worth, Texas in 1958 that left 17 people homeless (WBAP-TV, 1958).

Questions

The following questions are all asked to better understand the situation and provide a solution:

- How many people will the UNT Libraries need to hire to complete the digitization in time?
- Why were previous funds not enough?
- Why does the collection need to be digitized?
- Who will gain from digitizing the collection?

Overriding Problem

The overriding problem is that UNT Libraries does not have enough funds to complete the project as soon as possible before the fragile items in the collection break or become too brittle for the digitization process. Previous funding simply did not cover all of the expenses needed. UNT Libraries needs more staff to help digitize the collection and to organize the pieces online so that they are easily accessed and understood. The number of items that need to be evaluated for content, explained, digitized, and uploaded is immense. UNT Libraries needs funding to give each piece of history the attention it deserves, so its information can be used to benefit society.

Since the film is prone to breakage, the longer it takes to complete digitization, the more likely it is that items become too broken to be digitized and preserved. The effects of the overriding problem consist of the lack of digitization hindering the understanding of past events which can lead to previous mistakes repeating themselves and an uninformed community.

Objectives

UNT Libraries needs the funding of \$150,000 to hire more employees, buy more equipment, create a marketing plan, and send more items out for digitization by an outside source.

Everything from the funds will be used to digitize the fragile items from 1940-1976, upload them to the Portal to Texas History, and advertise them so the public is aware of the access they have to historical events. This will be completed in the time frame of one year.

The goals of the project consist of:

- Digitizing the years from 1940-1976
- Uploading quality images and videos of the items to the Portal to Texas History
- Providing summaries of each piece of history that is uploaded
- Creating a marketing strategy

Benefits

The goals of this project will also provide many benefits. The goals align perfectly with the Knight Foundation's initiative as they include the following benefits:

- Preserve history by digitizing delicate film
- Provide more information about and for journalism
- Create an informed and engaged community
- Connect people to each other and their past
- Spread awareness of the impact of and different perspectives on national and international events

Digitizing this collection will achieve all of the goals that this project has as it preserves history and gives that valuable information to the public.

Overall, the fragile items of history that contain precious information from the years of 1940-1976 need to be digitized as soon as possible. People are realizing the importance of saving history and art by uploading it online for the public. The efforts to digitize the NBC 5/KXAS (WBAP) Television News Collection needs funding. The researching of other projects allows UNT Libraries to plan their project effectively. And the funding raised will help UNT Libraries implement their plans and achieve their objectives.

Methods

The methodology of this project is straightforward. The project contains a complete evaluation plan, is sustainable, and contains its own dissemination plan.

The evaluation plan for this project consists of quarterly reports with the certain amount of film, scripts, photographs, and more that has been digitized. The end measurement will be in how many items have been digitized from the years of 1940-1976. The time frame goals are listed in the table below.

Table 1: Time Frame Goals

Quarter	Time Frame
Quarter 1	Planning complete, staff hired, equipment bought, digitization process started.
Quarter 2	Items from the years 1940-1950 completed.
Quarter 3	Items from the years 1950-1965 completed.
Quarter 4	Items from the years 1965-1976 completed.

This plan is sustainable because the end goal is definitive. The items that are digitized and uploaded to The Portal to Texas History will continue to be online with public access long after the project is completed.

The dissemination plan is a major part of the project itself. Creating the marketing campaign and advertising will get the word out about the project and the items open to the public. We will hire a marketing strategist who will create the dissemination plan and spread awareness of not only the current project, but also the collection and other items themselves.

Qualifications

UNT Libraries is qualified for this project because they have experience with completing digitization. Their values and mission also align with the goals of the project. They already have the facilities needed and just simply need to hire more staff and purchase a few more pieces of equipment.

Mission, Goals, Objectives

UNT Libraries mission statement is as follows:

“The UNT Libraries strongly supports the research initiatives of our students with innovative services and high-quality resources and collections.”

UNT Libraries prides itself in providing excellent resources for its students and the public. This project aligns perfectly with their mission statement as it allows UNT Libraries useful collection for research to be digitized and made easily accessible to the public.

This project would also be a great investment for the Knight Foundation as it aligns perfectly with your mission in the following areas:

- Investment in journalism, the arts, and communities
- Digitization of historical information
- Creation of an informed and engaged community

Management and Staffing

The funds requested would be used to hire the employees needed to complete the project. UNT Libraries needs more employees in order to not only digitize the collection, but also upload the information to The Portal to Texas History. Each piece of history that is uploaded must be evaluated for content. They need employees to watch each video and assess each script to understand its contents and then write a summary of the content to be uploaded with the primary source. This allows people to search for information in the portal and find all of the videos, photographs, and more related to the topic they searched for. This also gives people detailed context as to what is in the video, photograph, or script.

UNT Libraries also needs to hire a marketing strategist to create marketing plans and advertise the information being digitized. The collection contains priceless information and content that covers massive events in history. These pieces of history are immensely valuable as they provide knowledge of a different time and are full of mistakes, tragedies, and triumphs that people today can learn from. The collection needs to be advertised, so this information does not go to waste.

The following roles will be vastly important to the project overall. All of the staff will be working part-time, 20 hours a week, for one year.

Table 2: Staff Requested

Title	Number of People	Description
Project Manager	1	Organizes and leads the project by monitoring the process, managing the staff, and tracking the progress.
Marketing Strategist	1	Advertises the collection and project through social media and other methods.
Content Evaluator	2	Evaluates the items and writes detailed summaries and/or descriptions to be uploaded along with the digitized item.
Digitizer	3	Digitizes the items and/or organizes the items to be sent off to be digitized by an outside source.

Facilities and Equipment

UNT Libraries already has access to a lab for this project as they are currently digitizing items. UNT Libraries does need some new equipment to support the process and allow for the delicate items to be digitized quickly.

The main equipment that will need to be purchased consists of the following:

- Three high-quality microfilm scanners and five Epson scanners
- Two Epson printers
- Seven Apple Mac computers and accessories with software programs

The additional equipment bought with the funding will help make the digitization process more efficient. The high-quality scanners will allow the items to be consistent in quality and digitized quickly. The computers and software will allow the staff to edit digitized images so that they are clear, conduct research, and create flyers. The printers will allow for the marketing strategist to print flyers, posters, and more to advertise the collection.

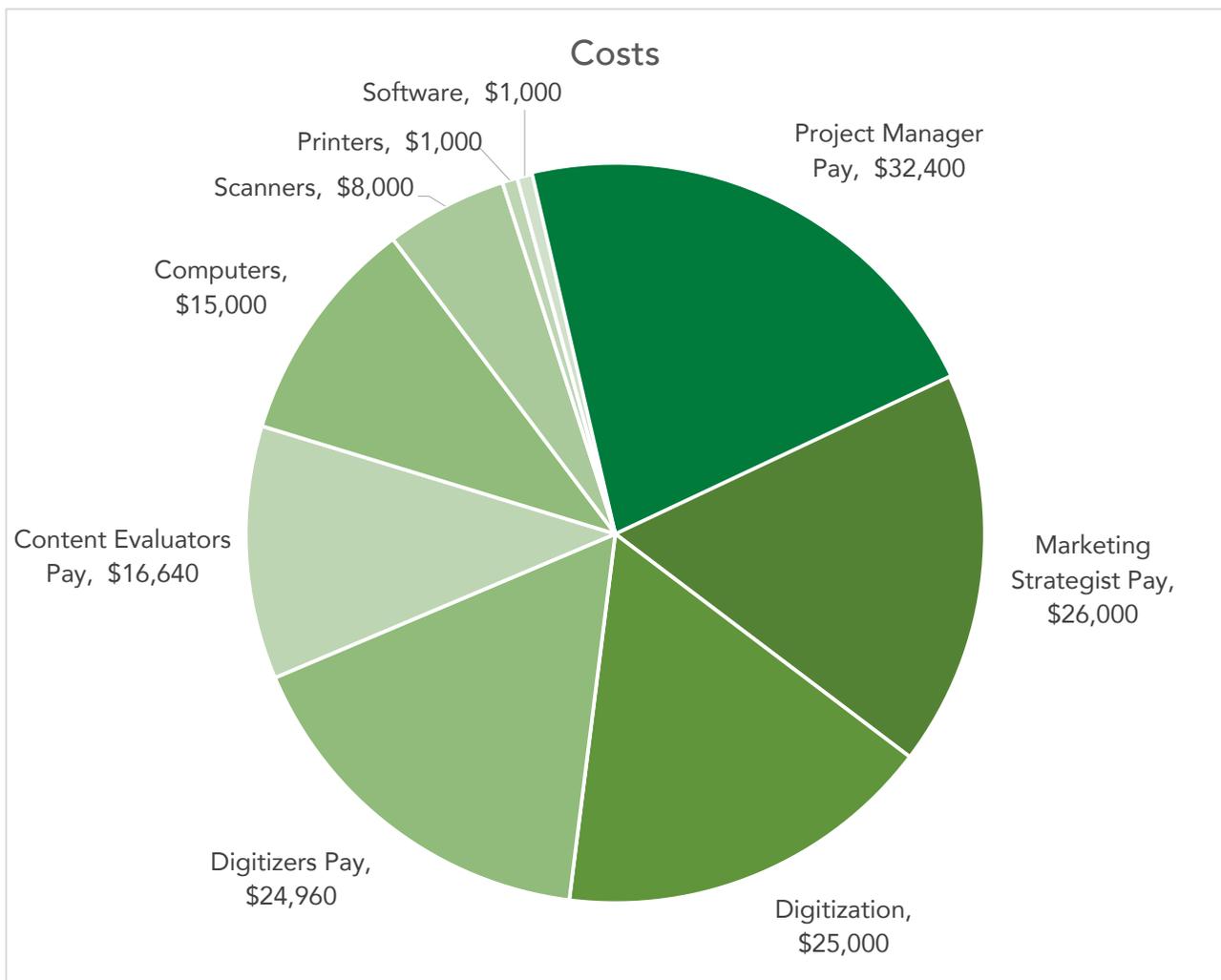
Costs

UNT Libraries needs \$150,000 to buy equipment, hire staff, and send items off for digitization so the fragile items of the NBC 5/KXAS (WBAP) Television News Collection can be digitized and uploaded to the Portal to Texas History website for the public.

The following table provides an overview of where the money is going to be spent.

Table 3: Budget

Amount	Purpose
\$100,000	Hiring and keeping staff part-time for one year.
\$25,000	Purchasing high-quality scanners, computers, and printers.
\$25,000	Sending a few specific items to be digitized by an outside source.



Graph 1: Costs

UNT Libraries needs \$150,000 to complete this project. This funding will be entirely spent towards the end goal of digitizing the collection in the ways mentioned above. The funding will be used to create better content for the public and to save history from wasting away by digitizing the items before they are ruined.

Benefits

The impact of digitizing this collection is immense. The solutions this project provides benefits communities, individuals, and society itself. We can be sure the collection will provide these benefits by implementing a marketing plan and ensuring that communities are aware of this valuable information. The more people who have access to the past, the more who can understand history and help prevent previous mistakes from happening again. The collection benefits:

- Both UNT students and students from other universities
- Researchers
- Journalists
- Historians
- Teachers
- Small communities in Texas
- Communities from all over the world

The benefits to spending the funding in the way mentioned before is the efficiency that the new staff and equipment would bring to the project. This funding would help UNT Libraries digitize their collection quicker, thus saving fragile items of history. The new staff, particularly the marketing strategist and evaluators, will bring a new level of quality and exposure to the content. Having a person solely dedicated to marketing will spread awareness of the precious collection. And having people dedicated to truly understanding and researching each item will give the collection more context and detail online for the public, so the history can be completely understood.

Digitizing this collection by using the funds in this particular way will achieve all of the goals that this project has as it will allow UNT Libraries to hire more staff who can work more efficiently to preserve history and give that valuable information to the public.

Conclusion

Overall, the goal of this project is to provide more information to the public while preserving history that would otherwise have been ruined. The project aligns with your mission, is achievable, and provides benefits more than I can say.

These precious items from history during the years of 1940-1976 are on film that is deteriorating. The funding provided for this project will not only simply allow these items to be digitized but will also spread awareness and provide context for the items so that the community can truly learn from history.

This project would give the public and students at UNT access to resources needed to be aware of historical moments in recent history. If this project is completed, multiple communities would have access to historical videos, photographs, scripts, and more with information that they would not otherwise have. This would add to the awareness of events in the community and highlight the history of Texas. History is massively important as it allows communities to learn from the past and ultimately create a better future.

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