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Assignment #1, Metadata for Moving Image Collections, Spring 2016
Metadata for searching moving image collections comparison.

I chose the UCLA Film and Television Archive and WGBH OpenVault for my moving image collections comparison. My searches included a person; African-American entertainer, Cab Calloway; the subjects, “black middle-class” or “African-American middle-class” and “method-acting”. The type of material I was seeking included narrative fiction and documentary films and video, and home movies.

UCLA Film & Television Archive

I first searched for Cab Calloway in the catalog of the UCLA-FTVA using a Title Search with a Quick Limit of “Nitrate”. One very detailed record for the film *Jitterbug Party* appeared. Although it was only one record, it was useful because several subject link headings were listed giving me additional pathways to explore. I then searched for Cab Calloway in the Credits search* (first name then last name; no xrefs). This resulted in a number of records encompassing films that featured Calloway’s sound recordings and songs on their soundtracks.

Searching Cab Calloway from the site’s home page, the Content tab listed 7 links including the Mayme A. Clayton Film Collection, “consisting of over 450 film holdings related to African American history and the portrayal of African Americans in film and television...” that includes the home-movies of Marie Dickerson Coker, an African-American aviatrix and entertainer. So, I basically stumbled upon my sought after amateur and family-made films. There was also a link to African American Film and Television (African American is never hyphenated in the catalog) that “features titles made both by and about African Americans...” including TV, films, and soundies. Conveniently, when you link to the description page of African American Film and Television, the data includes links to “collections important to the study of African

Americans in film and television...” such as The Schomburg Center of New York Public Library and The Library of Congress.

Searching for black middle-class and African–American middle class proved unsuccessful. But in the advanced section “african-american middle class” (without quotes) turned up 14 items when searching under KEYWORD. This was unexpected--I thought that TOPIC would produce more results. African-American middle class from the home page gave one result garnered from the copious synopsis of the individual titles in the LA Rebellion Redux Collection which is actually a screening series incorporating the LA Rebellion films and tapes. .

It was relatively easy to search UCLA-FTVA and there were different ways to engage the site. The search from the homepage was straightforward and, I believe, aimed at a general user. Further, the Recommended Search page has detailed descriptions for various specific terms listed like; Topic or genre/form, Keyword, Inventory number, Release date, Broadcast date, Title variants, Pre-existing works and Holdings. Advanced finding options within the catalog required more sophisticated knowledge of searching and of relationships but the catalog’s search page gives explanations of the search language, tells how to enter text, and what terms to use such as HKEY (“Holdings search is a command search which looks for command codes in front of search terms...”) and other tips. The HKEY proved helpful for finding specific types of media formats like 16mm and whether the film was an access copy or a preserved, archival negative.

“Method Acting” frequently hit on the words “acting” along with any instance (almost) of the word “method” although there was one description that referred to the acting technique popularly referred to as “the Method”. If I was searching again, I would try terms like “Actors’ Studio”, and “Stanislavsky Method”.

By using the name Cab Calloway I found what I was expecting but nothing that was new to me. However, the data lead me to some of the other topics and types of material I was interested in, like black home movies, and offered titles and synopsis that concerned the black middle class.

I am going to venture that the archive uses the MARC metadata standard like the rest of the UCLA libraries. Additionally, the catalogue records show links to both a “brief view” with descriptions and a “Staff MARC View” that displayed a numbered MARC record.

The metadata standard supported my search well and actually provided supplementary ideas for searches. There was also plenty of information about formats and the specific types of holdings the archive has including archival prints and access copies for viewing in ARSC.

The results were sorted by title and by release dated so I think it would be easy to find material according to date, however, there is not much information in the titles list related to a subject like African-American middle class. But for Cab Calloway, this ordering of results was handy.

WGBH OpenVault¹

The WGBH OpenVault is specific to public radio and television broadcasting programs and the results pages are less complex visually than UCLA-FTVA. They are shown as a list of links with one or two lines of excerpted description. There is not much direction for how to search, just a generic search bar. However, when you follow a link there is a “media only” check box on the upper left side of the page which you have to be aware of when searching. I noticed that I had left it checked after Cab Calloway, suspiciously, produced no hits. Unchecked, there

¹ OpenVault has an article on the archiving of the WGBH programs called *From thousands to 17* about transferring the American Archive of Public Broadcasting to seventeen LTO tapes stored at the Library of Congress which we got to see on our MIAP trip to Culpeper.

were a number of links to series and programs that included Calloway the performer or, less helpfully, the word “cab”. Browsing only included a “series” choice taking you to an alphabetical list of programs that you could explore only by their titles.

Because OpenVault is an archive of public television my results showed more journalism and documentaries than fictional films.

I guessed that the metadata scheme for WGBH OpenVault was PBCore because the organization is a part of public television. But I also looked at the call for interns at the WGBH archives resource page and participants are trained in PB Core (pbcore.org).

For OpenVault, the metadata was supportive if the search term corresponded with a program title or the synopsis of the program. Browsing for the term “method acting” or “acting” was not as helpful. When the programs are listed it does have a nice sidebar with related media and the amounts in the categories of Program, Video, Image and Series. The search “african american middle class” was productive but not necessarily precise pointing to several programs with content about race, class, and *the* middle class (ie, a program about John Updike). The data was well organized and when you click on a program title the page provides a button for citations.

Interesting additions to OpenVault are the Scholar Collections. These are “scholarly” articles by authors such as Dana Polan with an abstract, related content, and media clips, on topics that use the WGBH programming material including one on artist Erica Wilson, the “Julia Child of Needlework” television or on the 1970’s TV program Zoom. Somewhat pertinent to my searches was an article by Joseph Parrot on Pan Africanism, so it was disappointing that the metadata did not provide a link to the materials in this special section of the website.