

# Strategies for taking notes and keeping track of your research



Savvy Researcher Workshop, April 18, 2017  
Eleanor Dickson, Scholarly Commons, dickson@illinois.edu  
Bethany Anderson, University of Illinois Archives,  
bgandrsn@illinois.edu

After you leave the archives, what will you need to know about the materials you've made notes about or duplicated?



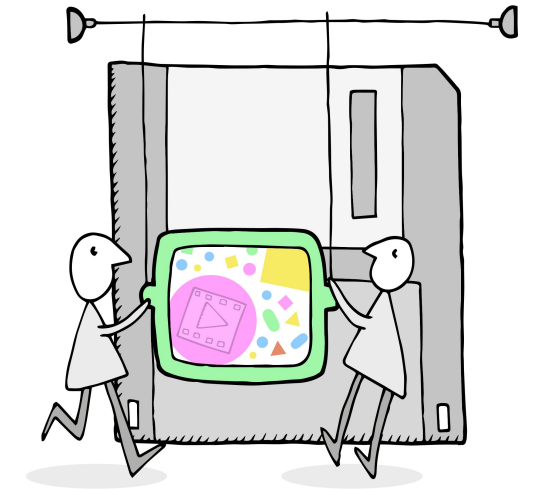
# Digital Collections

## Digitized materials:

- sometimes you can download the files, sometimes it is view-only, or only available to onsite researchers; note that not everything is digitized

## Born digital materials:

- special access policies
  - may be accessible online or in reading-room only
  - may not be able to get reproductions of files
  - may not be able to get copy of original files, rely on note-taking instead

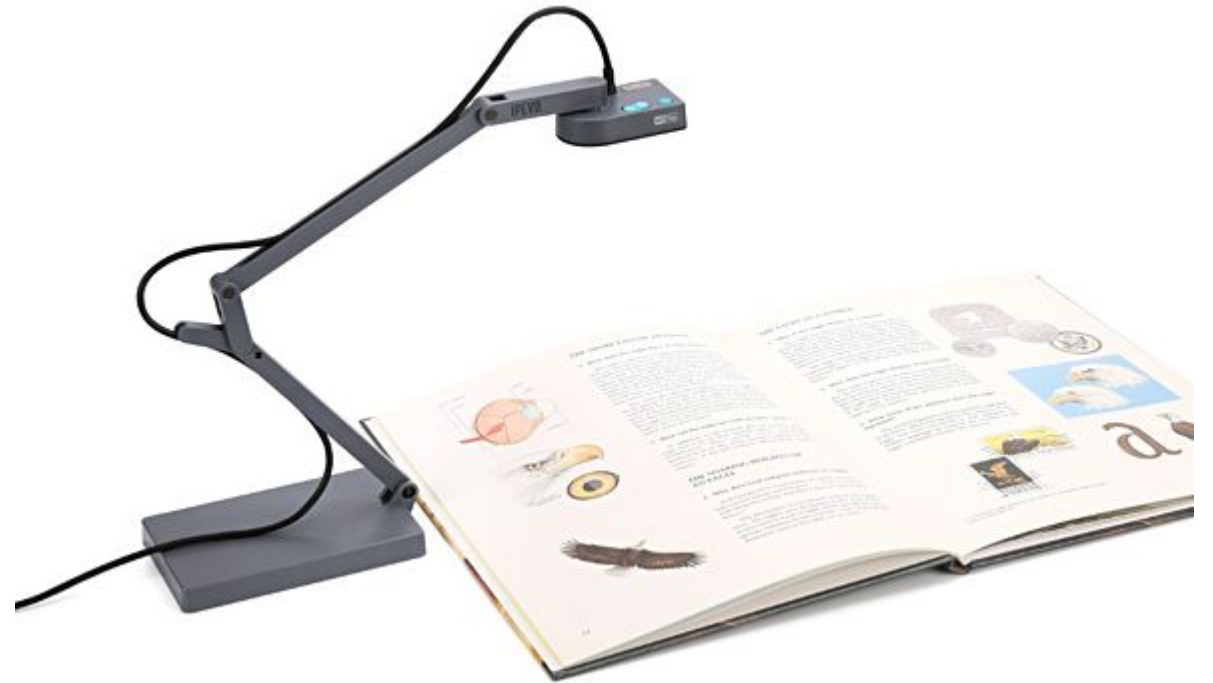


# Bulk-photography in the reading room

- Refer to camera/scanner use policy
- Tripod or document camera can help
- Use photographs for documentation
- Think about how you'll group (physically and intellectually) items, series, collections
  - E.g. multi-page documents?
- Be mindful of file quality
  - What do you want to do with them when you're done?

# Example: bulk-photographing at the LBJ Library

- Confirmed photo policy with archivist
- Brought document camera, plugged into laptop
- Shot several thousand photos in 3 days
- Kept track of work in an Google sheet



## **After you leave, you need to be able to:**

- Continue your research
- Easily reference and be able to check sources
- Cite your sources

## **So you need to make sure you have:**

- Context for your research
- The parts of your citations

# What to track

- Collection/Record Series title
- Box title
- Folder title
- Item “title”
- Audio time-marker
- Link to the item

## **Question:**

*How would you remember materials found in this folder in this box in this collection in this archives?*

*Carl Woese Papers, University of Illinois Archives:*

<https://archives.library.illinois.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=1>

1138

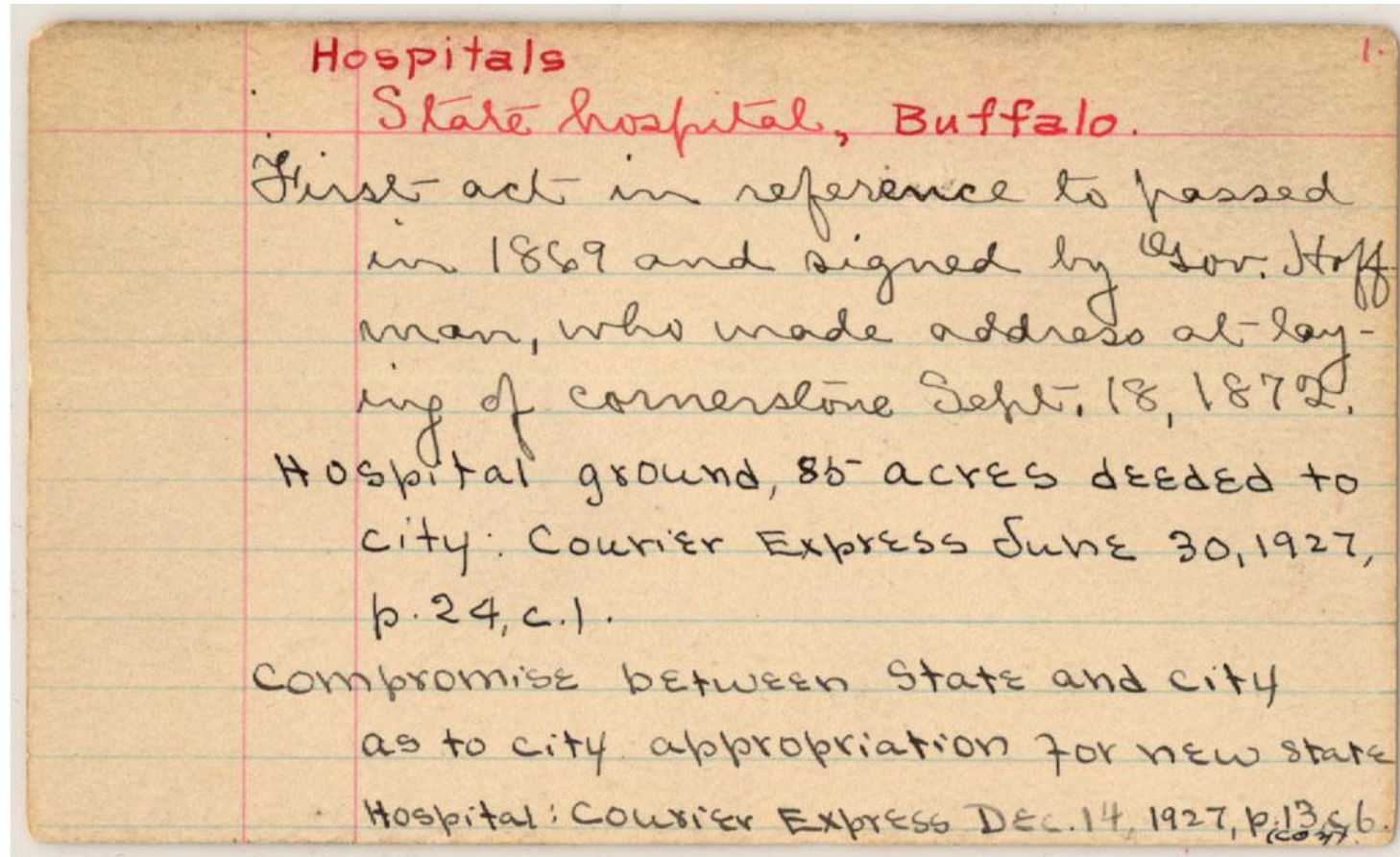


# How to document it

- In a way that's
  - Organized
  - Documented
  - Workable for you

**\*\*Note: we'll talk about documentation more in the second hour!**

# You can use paper



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Index\\_card#/media/File:Lhfhospitalsstatehospital001.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Index_card#/media/File:Lhfhospitalsstatehospital001.jpg)

# Or you can use digital tools

- To store files
- To track files
- To annotate files

# File storage

- Cloud backup
  - Pay attention though to wi-fi access
  - Budget for internet access/storage if needed
  - U of I Box: 50 GB
  - Google Drive: 30GB
- Or send external hard drive ahead of yourself (DHL)

# Some tools: Zotero

With Zotero you can:

- Collect
- Organize
- Cite
- Can share “libraries” with group

<https://www.zotero.org/>

# Some tools: Evernote

With Evernote you can:

- Take notes
- Store files
- “Clip” from the web
- Share documents

<https://evernote.com/>

# Or just structured directories of files

- Spreadsheets: for storing and tracking data
- Text files: for storing information
- Image files: Photos of boxes, folders, documents, etc.
- **Aim for “open” formats (CSV, plain text)**

# **No matter your method, remember:**

- When you leave, you will need to be able to
  - Continue your research
  - Cite your sources
- So you need to make sure you have
  - Context for your research
  - The parts of your citations
- And you'll thank yourself for using a method that is
  - Organized
  - Documented
  - Workable for you