



Crowdsourcing History with UA Libraries

In the photo collection the images are often faded, sometimes blurry, faces peering into the camera or gazing to the side at something no one else can see. The descriptive information is piecemeal: “football player?” “unidentified man” “student with analog computer.” Other images have no information at all. They wait for an identity — a person, a place, a time period -- to be recognized by someone.

In another collection are letters and documents, complete with misspellings, abbreviations and creases from being folded into envelopes for decades. The old-fashioned cursive handwriting, all swoops and flourishes, is difficult to decipher. Yet these documents and letters, like the photographs, are a treasure of information for genealogists, historians, and researchers from a swath of other fields.

Puzzles that could take such researchers a lifetime to solve (Who is in this picture? What Civil War battle does this diary mention?) can be answered quickly with crowdsourcing.

Crowdsourcing is a process that allows many users, working at their own time and pace, to help solve a time-consuming and difficult problem. The University Libraries recently launched two crowdsourcing projects to allow users to tag or transcribe materials from their collections.

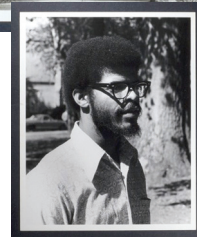
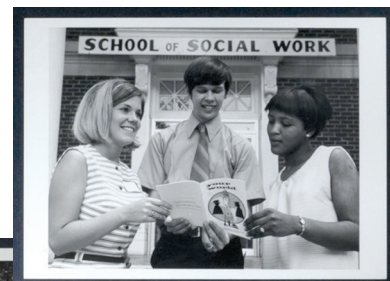
The University Libraries’ “Tag It” project allows users from any computer around the world to add valuable information to photograph collections. “Tag It” allows users, working from



the comfort of their own computers or mobile devices, to tag photographs, identifying people, places and things that were not recorded when the image was collected and not available when it was digitized.

“Tagging is more than identifying people in the photos,” said Jason Battles, associate dean for library technology planning and policy. “Perhaps someone can identify a time period by noticing the type of auto or building in the picture. For example, the user could share that a photo dated 1963 actually had to be later than that because a building in the picture wasn’t built until 1969.”

What happens if a picture is tagged with conflicting information? “The Libraries’ staff will then work to determine which tags are accurate,” Battles said, adding, “But so far that has not been an issue, and should not discourage users from sharing their knowledge.”



Tags users provide will be added to Acumen, the digital repository that allows users to search collections. Researchers can find material by using search terms from the tags. The more users tag, the richer the experience for all.

The other crowdsourcing project, “Transcription” allows users to decipher documents. Handwritten documents offer a unique challenge for users and researchers. Handwriting, especially from the 19th century or earlier, can be very difficult to decipher. With this transcription project, users can add valuable information to these documents by determining just what is written. These transcriptions support full text keyword searching for the materials

Why is this so valuable to researchers? “The original documents can’t be keyword searched,” Battles said. “The

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LIBRARY HORIZONS

A NEWSLETTER OF THE
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Message From the Dean

Over the past decade academic libraries have transitioned from repositories of millions of printed volumes to even more millions of volumes in digital format. Libraries at the Capstone are no exception with an estimated 80% of acquisitions expenditures devoted to databases, e-journals, and more recently to e-books.

Such online resources have increased student demand for library space and on-site services at a rate that continues to outpace increases in enrollments. For example, new services and renovated spaces in Rodgers Library for Science and Engineering last summer have led to a 40% increase in on-site visits this academic year over 2011-2012 as students have taken advantage of the Libraries' training programs and academic software applications on library computers.

To accommodate this ongoing demand for additional library space and services, the Board of Trustees recently approved plans for construction of a new addition to Gorgas Library. Groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for late spring 2014 with construction anticipated to be completed by the fall of 2015.

When ready, this new space will permit students to enjoy greater access to a broad array of new and expanded services. Whether it is improved access to new technologies such as 3D printing or to new academic software, students will have access to one of the finest academic libraries in the Southeast.



*Dr. Louis A. Pitschmann,
Dean of Libraries*

This issue of Library Horizons describes several examples of what the University Libraries is beta-testing and "rolling out" to ensure student success as well as to provide the general public and K-12 programs with greatly enhanced access to the Libraries' unique holdings documenting Alabama's rich political, social, and economic history.

We take great pride in the many advances which strong support from the University and our friends and donors has allowed the University Libraries to develop. The Libraries' faculty and staff could not continue their record of success and major statewide and national leadership if it were not for the support the Libraries receive. We thank you for that support and encourage you to visit the University Libraries on-site or online.

"Crowdsourcing" continued from page 1

researcher would have to read through an entire letter or diary looking for information. But with the full-text keyword search in the transcription, a researcher can know immediately which documents are relevant. It saves countless hours."

To try your luck at tagging, go to tagit.lib.ua.edu.

For many, transcription is like a puzzle -- a great way to spend a few hours or a few minutes. To try it, go to transcribe.lib.ua.edu.

Cathy Butler-Burnette, editor, *Dialog*



Current News and Events

New 3D Printing Studio Attracts Students from Across Campus



Since November 2012, UA Libraries 3D Printing Studio users have successfully printed numerous 3D objects, such as robot parts, model rockets, gears, brackets, chemical structures, and art sculptures. These objects were

created for class projects, research, and general hobby interest.

3D printing is an additive manufacturing technique where 3D objects are created from a combination of individual cross-sectional slices. These slices are assembled layer on top of layer and are comprised of materials such as plastics, resins, ceramics, or metals. Additive manufacturing is a powerful technique that allows users to prototype complex 3D digital designs within a few hours. Importantly, this technology brings design and manufacturing accessible to anyone; only basic training is necessary to begin producing 3D printed objects.

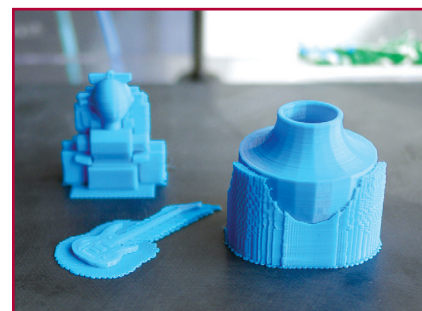
The studio has been incorporated into 8 classes including 5 sections of ART 131 (Spring 2013, 3D Design), 2 sections of ART 224 (Fall 2013, Introduction to Digital Art), and 1 section of MIS 200 (Spring 2013, Fundamentals of Management Information Systems).

Users come from departments across campus including Advertising and Public Relations, Aerospace Engineering, Art & Art History, Biology, Center for Instructional Technology, Chemical Engineering,

Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Clothing Textiles and Interior Design, Electrical Engineering, Geology, Journalism, Management Science, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Physics, Psychology, and School of Library Science.

The 3D Printing Studio is housed in the Rodgers Library for Science and Engineering.

Vincent F. Scalfani, Ph. D., librarian, Science and Engineering



The University Libraries' Area Computing and Web Services introduced real-time computer availability information on the Libraries' website (<http://www.lib.ua.edu/computers>) during the

Spring 2013 term. This new service allows patrons to quickly see which computers, both Windows and Macs, are available for use in Bruno, Gorgas, McLure, and Rodgers Libraries as well as the Sanford Media Center (SMC).^{*} Patrons can view availability information by floor in each of these locations. The service currently includes maps for the 1st and 3rd floors of Gorgas Library providing detailed information on the position of open computers. Additional maps are planned for all major floors throughout the libraries. ^{*}Computers in the SMC are for UA students only and can be reserved by calling (205) 348-4651.

Jason Battles, associate dean, Library Technology Planning and Policy



The Library Support Staff Association hosted a 2-day book repair workshop last October. Ann Frellsen from Emory University explains the repair technique to David Lewis, Annex Services.



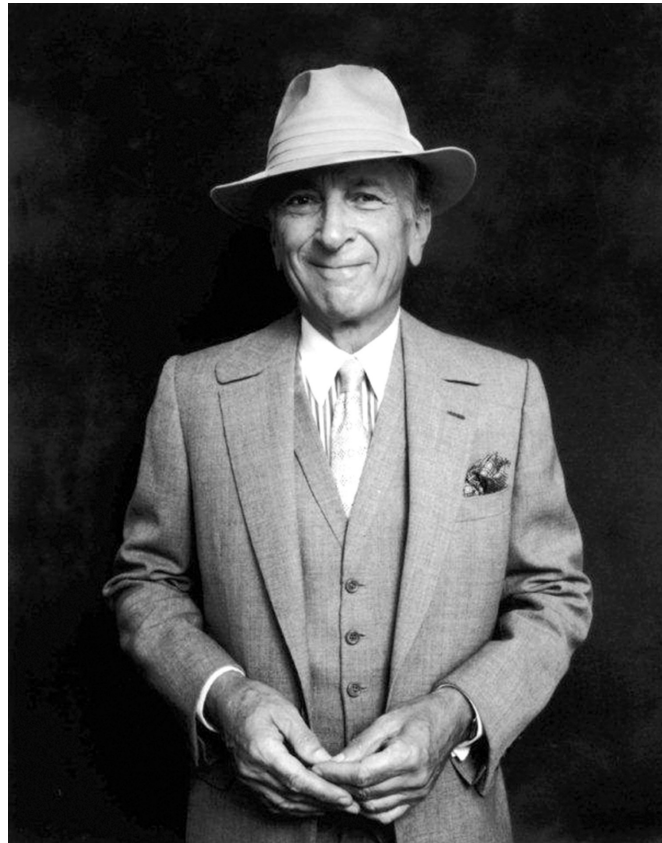
Gay Talese named 2013 Harper Lee Award recipient

Literary innovator and University of Alabama(UA) Library Leadership Board member Gay Talese has been named the 2013 recipient of the *Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Distinguished Writer of the Year*. A UA alumnus, Talese received the award at the Alabama Writers Symposium in Monroeville on April 26 at the annual luncheon.

In his letter of nomination, Don Noble, UA Professor of English Emeritus and host of the Alabama Public Television literary talk show "Bookmark," wrote, "Gay Talese has strong Alabama connections. He graduated from UA in 1953; covered the civil rights movement in Alabama in the 1960s; returns often to visit, read, speak, and sign; and he has written of his experiences in Alabama in the 2006 book, *A Writer's Life*."

During his years on the Tuscaloosa campus, Talese covered sports for *The Crimson White*. He served as sports editor during his junior and senior years when he first began experimenting with traditional journalism in his column *Sports Gay-zing*. He recently told Noble that he continues to follow the Crimson Tide.

"After all these many years, I must confess to keeping in touch with Alabama's football fortunes, and have felt a sense of satisfaction in the recent (2009 & 2011) championship seasons," he said for an article published in the



Winter 2012 issue of "*Crimson Magazine*." "[I felt] a remarkable sense of relief and pleasure following the LSU fall to Alabama [in] this past season's finale."

Talese has been chronicling American life and writing the literature of reality for more than half a century. His career started while he was a high school student in Ocean City, New Jersey, where he was the sports reporter for the town weekly. He took his column to the University of Alabama in 1949, and following his service in the Army, he began work as a reporter at *The New York Times* in 1956. From 1965, he wrote for "*Esquire*" producing some of the finest magazine pieces of his generation, many of which are collected in "*The Gay Talese Reader: Portraits and Encounters*" (2003).

"Some may argue that Talese is simply a journalist," wrote Noble. "He may have started out that way, but as commentators such as Tom Wolfe have noted, it was Talese who, along with Jimmy Breslin and Norman Mailer, invented the genre *New Journalism* which we now call creative nonfiction."

His piece, "*Frank Sinatra Has a Cold*," was called by "*Esquire*" the finest it ever published. He has profiled many celebrities over the years, but Talese's magazine pieces and books have been primarily concerned with ordinary people: the overlooked non-newsworthy population that is everywhere, but rarely taken into account by journalists and other chroniclers of reality.

Talese has also written for "*The New Yorker*" and four of his books have been best sellers: "*Unto the Sons*" (1992), "*Thy Neighbor's Wife*" (1980), "*Honor Thy Father*" (1971), and "*The Kingdom and the Power*" (1968).

The Alabama Writers' Forum, a partnership program of the *Alabama State Council on the Arts*, coordinates the selection of the *Harper Lee Award* recipient annually from nominations from the field. The honor is presented annually by *Alabama Southern Community College* at the Symposium. It is made possible through a generous grant from *George F. Landegger*, chairman, *Parsons and Whittemore*.

Danny Gamble, Alabama Writers' Forum
Photo by Joyce Tenneson



News from the Faculty and Staff

Jason Battles has been appointed associate dean for Library Technology Planning and Policy. Battles is responsible for developing and executing plans and policies for Web services, digital services, area computing services, Acumen, and integrated library systems and e-resources management.

Barbara Dahlbach, collection coordinator for Social Sciences and the Libraries' Annex, received the Joel L. Walker Friend to Psychology Award at the UA Psychology Department honors award luncheon April 5, 2013. This award was made in recognition of Dahlbach's exceptional work with the faculty and students in psychology, particularly in recognition of her help with the citation review portion of the departmental program reviews and individuals' Faculty Activity Report.

Harriet Deason, manager, Administrative and Fiscal Affairs, received the Dr. Minnie C. Miles Endowed Excellence Award at The University of Alabama's Spring 2013 Faculty/Staff Meeting.

The Miles Award, established in 1995, honors exempt, non-faculty administrative employees who have performed in an exemplary manner, exceeding the expectations set for their position and fostering the mission of the University. The award is named

honoring Dr. Minnie C. Miles, a long-term business faculty member who began her lifetime of service to The University of Alabama in 1942 and retired in 1978.

Jennifer McClure, humanities coordinator, Collection Management, has been accepted as an Modern Language Association bibliographer.

Brett Spencer, reference librarian, Gorgas Information Services, was recognized by the School of Library and Information Studies' chapter of Beta Phi Mu Library Honor Society as 2013 Librarian of the Year. Spencer was recognized for his exceptional accomplishments as a librarian and for his many outstanding contributions to library education.

Tom Wilson has been named associate dean for Branch Libraries and Digital Student Services. Wilson is responsible for planning, policies, and administration of the branch libraries including Rodgers, McClure, and Bruno; Sanford Media Center; Digital Humanities Center; geo-spatial support services; library instructional programs for science technology, engineering, and math students; copyright; Institutional Review Board; and grant and contract compliance.

In Memoriam



Kate W. Ragsdale, retired planning officer for The University of Alabama Libraries, passed away February 22, 2013. Employed by the Libraries for over 20 years, Ragsdale first worked in the Business Library before joining the Libraries' administration. She was responsible for coordinating all aspects of planning and reporting, ranging from annual plans and statistical reports to large construction and renovation projects including Hoole Library, Rodgers Library, Bruno Library, and the Library Annex.

Before receiving her degree in Library Science and joining the Libraries, Ragsdale worked at the Human Resources Institute in the UA College of Commerce and Business Administration.

During her career Ragsdale was an active member of the American Library Association, the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Library Administration and Management Association, Special Libraries Association, Southeastern Library Association, and the Alabama Library Association serving as an officer when called.

After her retirement in 2006, she continued to serve as a volunteer in many civic organizations including the Friends of the Library Board

Tuscaloosa Public Library and for many years served on the board of West Alabama AIDS Outreach.

Ragsdale was awarded the UA Library Leadership Award for faculty in 2004 and received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2012 from the UA School of Library and Information Studies.

"Kate was indeed an exceptional individual. She was ever ready to help in whatever way she could whether the opportunity was with an individual or an entire organization. Her professional leadership and the genuine enthusiasm with which she approached each person, each project, and each new day will be greatly missed by all who had the honor and pleasure of benefitting from her many years of outstanding service," said Louis A. Pitschmann, dean of UA Libraries.

Christine S. Hollingsworth, an active member of the Library Leadership Board since 2006, passed away at her home in Leeds, Alabama, March 5, 2013. A wonderful friend of the University Libraries, Hollingsworth donated her large cookbook collection to Special Collections several years ago, faithfully attended board meetings during her long illness, and assisted in the recruitment of new board members. She was a devoted Crimson Tide fan and attended numerous sporting events. She is survived by her husband, Robert A. Hollingsworth Jr.



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We are deeply grateful to donors at every level, all of whom make it possible for the University Libraries to enhance the services that students, faculty, and staff of the University of Alabama enjoy every day.

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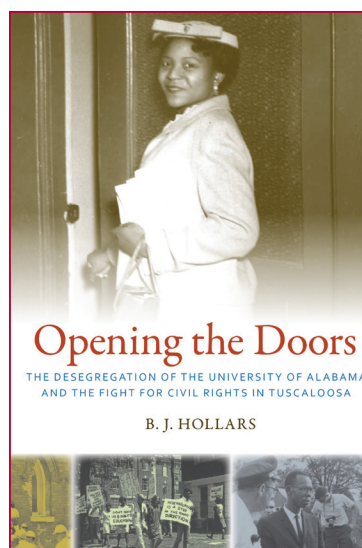
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Joshua D. Rothman, UA associate professor of history and Library Leadership Board member, spoke in Hoole Library last fall about his new book, *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson* (UGA Press, 2012).



University Libraries sponsored author B.J. Hollars' presentation of his new book in April. The lecture was part of The University of Alabama's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Stand in the Schoolhouse Door throughout 2013, with a series of activities and events designed to honor the desegregation of UA in June 1963; the courage and dedication of the

two African-American students who enrolled in the University on June 11, 1963; and the University's ongoing commitment to change over the past 50 years and to continued progress in the next 50 years.



“Gifts” continued from page 6

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Contact Donna Adcock at (205) 348-1416 so that we may adjust our records.