

“Converting The Appeal-Democrat newspaper archive from microfilm to Digital Reel has greatly improved the user experience of our patrons. The quality of the articles and photos is incredible compared to the old methods of viewing microfilm, and the full text search functionality allows us to find information in ways previously not possible.”

Gina Zurakowski, Archives Librarian
Yuba County Library Local History Archives



INDUSTRY

- Libraries

LOCATION

- Yuba County, California

CHALLENGES

- Tedious newspaper article and photo retrieval from physical microfilm and associated reader/printer machines
- Poor quality microfilm that resulted in difficult-to-read articles

DIGITAL REEL SOLUTION

- 1,200 microfilm rolls converted at BMI Sunnyvale, California facility
- Digital newspaper archive hosted at BMI Sacramento data center
- Staff and public now access newspaper archive online from Digital Reel browser-based viewer

BENEFITS

- Public workstations enable patrons to access the digital newspaper archive
- Full text search empowers patrons to search for dates, names and events across entire newspaper catalogue
- Optimum article and photo quality using adjustable image enhancement
- Reduction in staff time needed to help patrons locate articles (saves hours per week)

Case Study



Overview

The Yuba County Library Local History Archives room strives to be the recognized repository for written and audio materials dealing with the history of Yuba County, California.

A key part of this history is the *Appeal-Democrat*, the leading local news source for Sutter and Yuba County. The newspaper is a direct descendant of a line of newspapers that dates back to the Marysville Herald, which debuted in August 1850, two years after gold was discovered nearby at Sutter's Mill.

Gina Zurakowski, Archives Librarian, explains, “We had microfilm for the newspaper dating back to 1849 and the archive is heavily used by local historians looking for Gold Rush information. Converting this microfilm archive to Digital Reel has improved the image quality of the content and empowered users with full text search to find information in ways previously not possible.”

Staff Time Spent Assisting Patrons Reduced with Digital ReelL

The *Appeal-Democrat* microfilm archive cabinet and two reader/printers were stored in the History Archives room. Anyone from the public could sign in and access the archive.

Zurakowski states, “We had all the common hassles you can imagine with physical microfilm. We would also receive phone calls from out-of-state patrons looking for information like obituaries of family members. I would spend at least 3-4 hours a week looking for this information and then would print and mail it to them.” With Digital ReelL, the library staff can fulfill requests in seconds using text search and PDF email functions.

“Digital ReelL alleviated all of this trouble as patrons can quickly retrieve information without handling physical microfilm. I find and print information in a fraction of the time”, concludes Zurakowski.

1,200 Microfilm Rolls Digitally Converted at BMI's Facility

The Digital ReelL solution began with the secure shipment of the physical microfilm rolls to BMI's Sunnyvale, California conversion facility. The microfilm rolls were sent in batches of 300-350 at a time.

Appeal-Democrat Digital Newspaper Archive Hosted at BMI Data Center

After BMI scanned the 1,200 *Appeal-Democrat* microfilm rolls, the digital newspaper archive was stored at BMI's secure, Sacramento data center (via BMI's partnership with RagingWire).

Records Easily Accessible from Public-Facing Workstations

In the past, Yuba County Library only had two physical microfilm readers. Today, patrons access Digital ReelL from one of 24 computer workstations. The interface is intuitive and emulates microfilm retrieval from a standard reader-printer but in a simple, elegant way.

Full Text Search

Full text search is unlike anything the Library has had before. Users can now find information in seconds using key words and dates (e.g. obituaries, historical events, genealogy). Search terms are highlighted in yellow on each returned newspaper page result.

Article and Photo Quality Improvement

One of the key challenges Yuba County Library faced with the physical microfilm was poor image quality. Difficult-to-read articles and grainy photos were not uncommon.

Zurakowski states, “Our patrons find the adjustable grayscale feature of Digital ReelL very beneficial. They can take faded and even illegible articles and enhance the image so that it is much easier to read. Newspaper pictures can be converted to high quality photos.

“Overall, Digital ReelL is helping us achieve our mission. We are offering an easy way to look up historical information and enhance the image quality of that information”, concludes Zurakowski.



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