Since the PowerPoint is a very large file, it can be downloaded via this link: <https://1drv.ms/p/s!Auz1T-j7k9wwg5Zi_iQP9mjWIxQD3w?e=ccmrNo>

Reflection

For Assignment 3, I created a PowerPoint to disseminate what I have learned throughout the semester regarding the challenges archives face when digitizing materials and the upkeep of that data. PowerPoint is a proprietary presentation software that my professors use in their classes. Educators use PowerPoint as the software allows them to incorporate audio, photos, videos, and more into their lectures. To highlight the complexity archives face with digitizing collections, I decided to investigate the Kansas Square Dance Association records. For this project, PowerPoint gave me the opportunity to incorporate several different types of media into my presentation and arrange it to my satisfaction. A downside of PowerPoint is that it can be quickly abused and result in a presentation that distracts the reader. Although I found PowerPoint’s recording feature a way to enrich my presentation, I underestimated how much time it would take to record the audio.

PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, and Google Slides are few of the many different presentation software options that exist and allow the user to create slideshows that include audio and video. Although I have used all the beforementioned offerings, I have found that majority of the population I interact with use PowerPoint. I have observed at conferences and in lectures that those who use PowerPoint appear to have the least amounts of problem when presenting their findings. I attribute that to Microsoft’s offering being the dominant program out there and when someone tries to convert a Prezi or Google Slides file to a PowerPoint file, data be changed or lost. PowerPoint also permits the user to arrange and organize items on the slides to his or her liking.

To see what challenges archivists may face when digitizing a collection, I decided to investigate the Kansas Square Dance Association records at the University of Kansas. This is a set of materials that includes different formats. A large portion of the items are paper and there is no challenge in digitizing them. Throughout the collection, there are cassette tapes, vinyl records, photographs, and 3D objects. Digitizing these items may be more complex because specialized equipment is required. Although photographs can be digitized using scanners, a regular scanner may not able to capture an image in the resolution needed for preservation. Cassette tapes, vinyl records, and 3D objects will require specialized equipment. When I was at the University of Kansas archives, the only technology that had to digitize items with was a scanner. If one wanted a digital copy of a CD, LP, and other like formats, one would have to file a request with the archives.

When using PowerPoint, I faced some challenges. With presentation software, less words on a slide is better. Too many words on a slide can make it difficult, if not impossible, to read the information. Also, if the user is placing complete sentences into a PowerPoint, then there may be no point in using the software. Another challenge I came across is how to make the slides attractive, but not distracting. To reach this balance, I discovered that I needed to try different backgrounds and text color combinations to make sure that the text was readable. What may work on one slide may not be the case for another.

One of the purposes why I used PowerPoint for this project is that I wanted give information aurally. Microsoft’s software has a recording feature and it is a simple tool to use. However, recording the audio took longer than I expected. One reason is that there were cases I recorded the audio for a slide between two to four times. Sometimes I did not like how I presented the information and wanted discarded that copy. Other times I could not think of anything. Another reason why the recording process took longer than I estimated was that I realized I like to talk. I try to provide examples and explain things clearly, which add time to the presentation.

Doing the second option for Assignment 3 allowed me to better understand and demonstrate the challenges archivists may face in the digital era. Although certain hardware and software is needed to open Word files, these documents can be printed and distributed in a paper format. If a slideshow includes audio or video, the user will need software to access the information. With PowerPoint, the user needs to be careful when creating a presentation. Too much information can make it difficult for one’s audience to read the slides. I found that PowerPoint’s allowance of different media types and arrangement of information permitted me to create a presentation that would allow my messages to come across more clearly. The Kansas Square Dance Association records brought awareness to issues archivists may have to think about when digitizing collections, especially when there is information in different formats.