

Collections Management By The Truckload



Keeping XXL Collections Under Control

The TECHNOSEUM: Where I come from



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TECHNOSEUM – Landesmuseum für Technik und Arbeit (Museum for technology and work)



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Situated in Mannheim
20 km from Heidelberg
80 km from Frankfurt

The TECHNOSEUM: Where I come from



Collects and exhibits objects
documenting the change of work
and everyday life since ~ 1750 in
Southwest Germany



Claim “Nothing is more exciting
than technology”

3 very different, very large collections

- Case 1: A collection of advertising materials/ephemera (6,918)**
Kaleidoskope of pop and advertising culture (ca.1880-2012)
- Case 2: A collection of radios and TV sets (2,970)**
Comprehensive collection of radio history (ca. 1920-1990)
- Case 3: A collection of broadcasting technology (1,646+)**
Comprehensive collection of broadcasting technology (1949-2014)

Challenges, strategies, tools and lessons learned.



Aquiring Large Collections: Vision vs. Reality



How you think it will look like



How it really looks like

Cataloguing of single objects ≠ Handling (and cataloguing) of large collections

Cataloguing 1 object takes # # minutes.

Cataloguing 3000 objects takes 3000 x ### minutes.

Wrong

Every new acquisition is like an iceberg

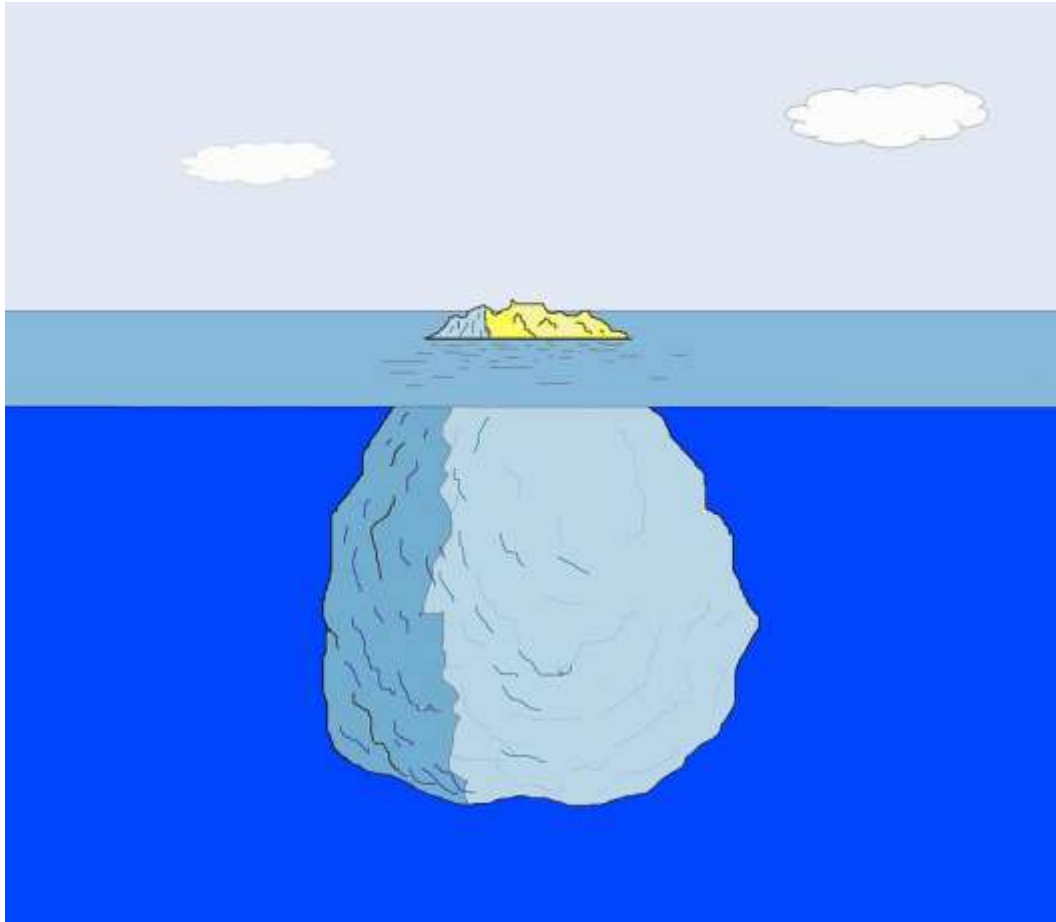


Image: JosephMonter via pixabay (CC0)

Cataloguing

Research
Cleaning/Conservation
Photographing
Wrapping
Storing

Large collections are a whole pack ice belt

Time?
Staff?
Money?

Cleaning?
Photographing?
Which comes first?
Who does what?



Image: Barni1 via pixabay (CC0)

Time and expertise to do the research

Who is responsible?

Packing
Marking
Finding

Space to sort?

Intermediate storage?

Forget your standard solutions. Develop a customized strategy!



Image: Natalia_Kollegova via pixabay (CC0)

Case #1: Ephemera Apocalypse

Challenges:

- Unknown number of items
- Collected without a strategy
- Taken in from chaotic storage



Case #1: Ephemera Apocalypse

Strategy:

- first sorting, then cataloguing
- Definition of sorting categories, handling of duplicates, terminology
- Workload on many shoulders

Tools:

- “Live” accessioning register
- pre-filled cataloguing mask

Inventarnummer: **EVZ:2011/1026 ff. Kopiervorlage**

Aktueller Standort: MER Depot Merowingerstraße

Datum Standortänderung: 07.12.2011

Objektbezeichnung: Objekt

Altplan: 3.2#991.01 Werbeschilder, Reklamartikel
3.2#998 Alltagskultur

zuständiger SachbearbeiterIn: Mah

verantwortlicher SachbearbeiterIn: Ks

Original/NachbauModell: Original

Exponatkartendruck und Exponaterfassungsbogen in Papierform:

Inventarnummer	Objektbezeichnung	Objekteigename	Inventaristator	Erfassungsdatum
EVZ:2011/6057	Tragetasche	Stadt Ludwigshafen am Rhein	Kor	02.10.2017
EVZ:2011/6058	Tragetasche	Gelbe Tragetasche	Kor	02.10.2017
EVZ:2011/6059	Tragetasche	Tragetasche Mannheimer Morgen	Kor	02.10.2017
EVZ:2011/6060	Tragetasche	Tragetasche Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Neckar	Kor	02.10.2017
EVZ:2011/6061			BoM	
EVZ:2011/6062			BoM	
EVZ:2011/6063			BoM	
EVZ:2011/6064			BoM	
EVZ:2011/6065			BoM	
EVZ:2011/6066			BoM	
EVZ:2011/6067			BoM	

Case #1: Ephemera Apocalypse

Lessons learned:

- Avoid overlappings in sorting categories
- Re-evaluate your definitions during the process
- Strength in age difference
- Someone has to take the lead



Case #2: Turn your radio on...

Challenges:

- Unknown number of items
- TECHNOSEUM already has large radio collection
- Space consumption



Case #2: Turn your radio on...

Strategy:

- 1 person responsible (transports, cataloguing, storage)
- Additional shelves for inspection and cataloguing
- First step: ALL objects are catalogued
- Second step: finding duplicates, making deaccessioning decisions



Wegavision 3000 L
Top: EVZ:2002/0751-082
Bottom: EVZ:2014/2320

Case #2: Turn your radio on...

Tools:

- pre-filled cataloguing mask
- using logistics concept for exhibitions
- barcode
- using already existing documentation (i.e. radiomuseum.org)



Case #2: Turn your radio on...

Lessons learned:

- Supervision “from nail to nail” is crucial
- cleaning MUST be planned part of the logistic chain
- And...



Case #2: Turn your radio on...



Creativity doesn't make space
issues go away!

Case #3: Think broad, think broadcasting

Challenges:

- Unknown number of items
- between gem and spare parts collection
- fragmentary lists, next to no documentation
- need for extreme expert knowledge
- hazardous material



Case #3: Think broad, think broadcasting

Strategy:

- Start with the radios
- Continue with the “big toys”
- Search good homes for the “superfluous”
- Ask former radio employees for identification/advice
- Adding additional space by installing a narrow aisle rack storage

Tools:

- Patience and persistence



Case #3: Think broad, think broadcasting



Summing up: 5 traps to avoid

1. Overestimating experiences from single item cataloguing
2. Underestimating space issues
3. Underestimating staff issues
4. Underestimating logistic issues
5. Overestimating quality and depth of prior documentation



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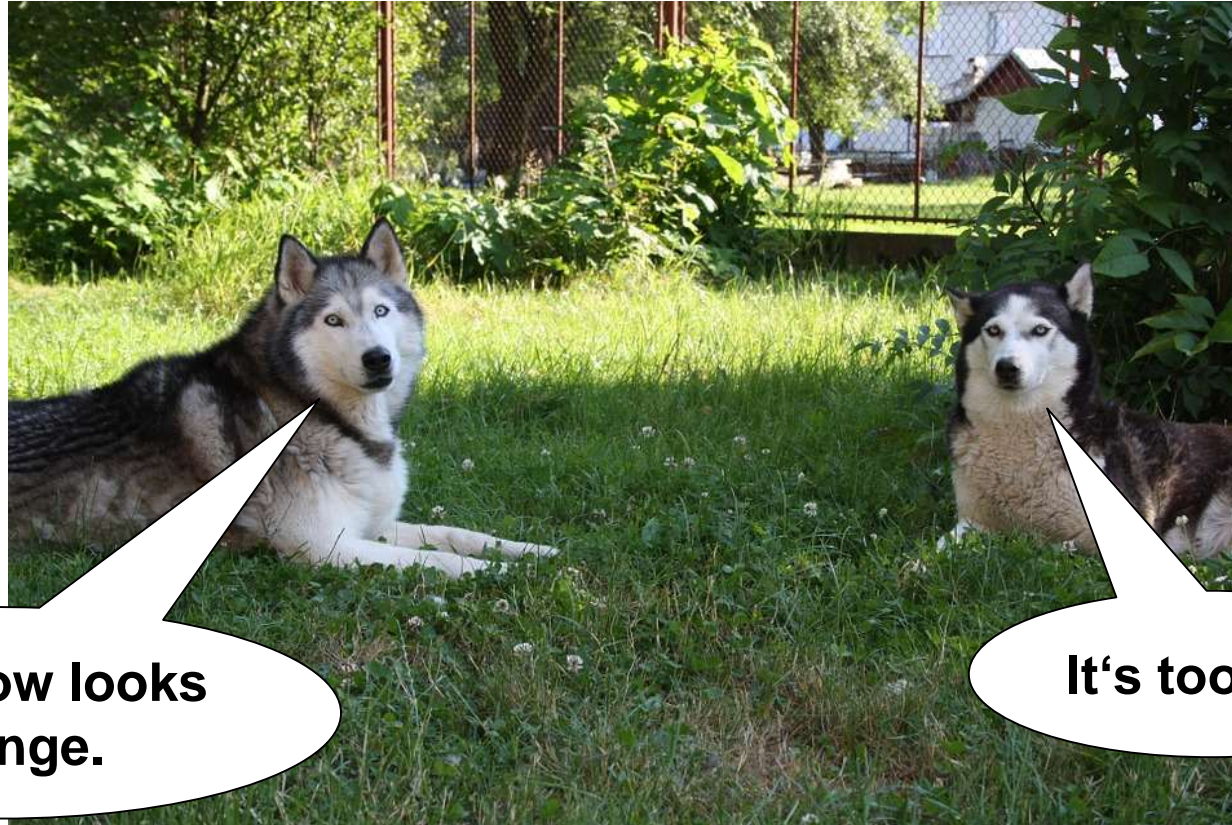
Summing up: 5 things that push the project forward

1. Clear Responsibilities
2. Good preparation of documenting/cataloguing processes
3. Good logistics concept
4. Sufficient space for working and (intermediate) storage
5. Courage to re-evaluate decisions



Image: Natalia_Kollegova via pixabay (CC0)

Every new collection holds new challenges!



**This snow looks
strange.**

It's too hot!

Image: Maja2920 via pixabay (CC0)

Thank you and may the road rise to meet you!

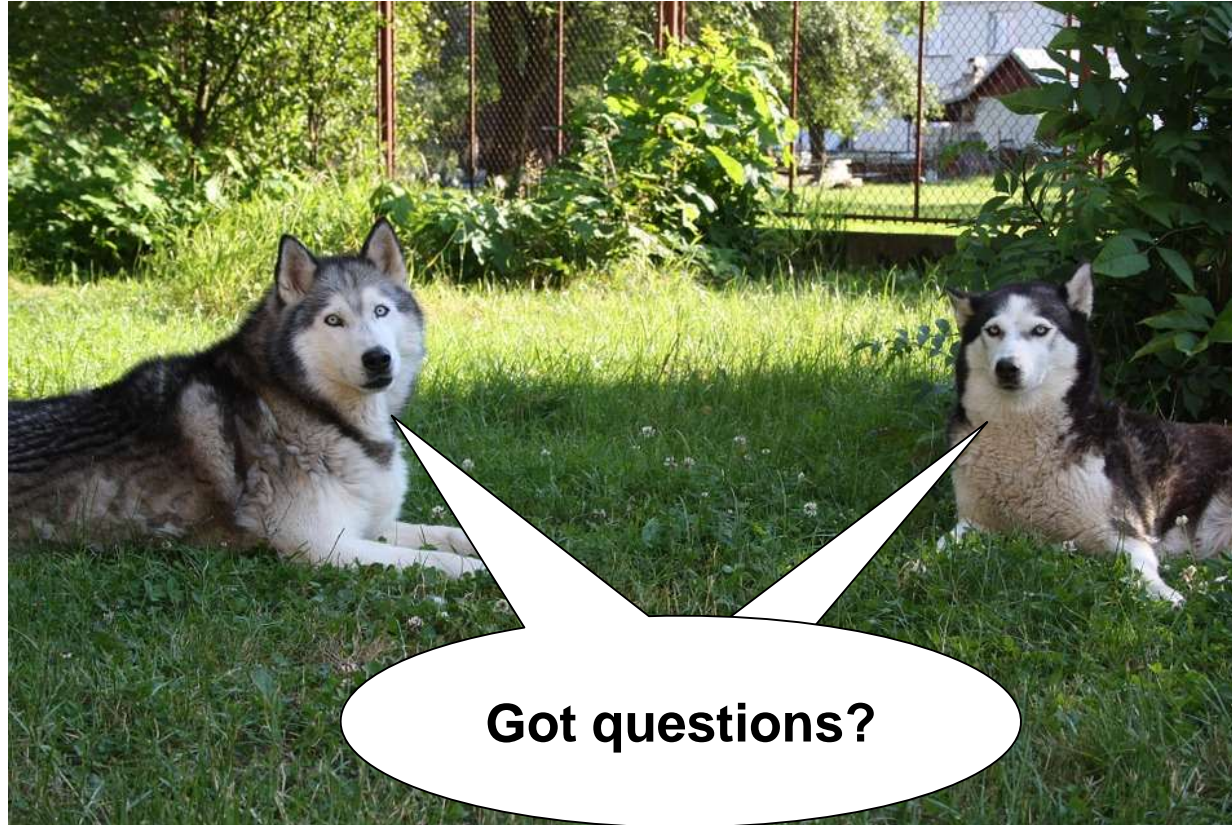


Image: Maja2920 via pixabay (CC0)