the stories of success that have been recorded.” But the site is not well connected to K–12 teachers or public libraries, and is connected to only sixty colleges and universities as subscribers. The HistoryMakers team has worked in multiple ways to address this issue over the last twenty years by creating videos for public libraries, public programming for PBS, and grants for faculty, graduate students, and students to use the collections. In 2004 they also created a pathbreaking partnership with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) to digitize the archive. CMU fostered a great many innovations on the digital site and spearheaded an effort to update the deployment of the digital archive to a broader set of platforms. Over several years, they also presented these innovations at the Oral History Association’s annual conference; all of these presentations are available through the HistoryMakers site, a powerful and intentional example of transparency and sharing of digital systems, software, and interfaces for video libraries. Since 2019 the University of Virginia has led a follow-up effort. Still, a significant gap remains between the richness of the site, on the one hand, and its “findability” for young people and their teachers and parents, on the other.

This is an incredibly important archive that needs to be shared with a much wider audience. It could also benefit from guest curators creating many more “mixtapes” across the collection to be used with specific audiences, to draw them in. To reach its goal of five thousand interviews, perhaps it will also aim for gender equity. From Harriet Tubman, “Go to freedom or die today,” to Maxine Waters, “Reclaiming my time,” such an achievement would reflect the triumphs of the women who have kept this nation within bounds by setting the limits when no one else would or could.

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A Journal of the Plague Year: An Archive of Covid-19, https://covid-19archive.org/s/archive/page/Share. Created and maintained by Arizona State University School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies. Reviewed Jan. 15–22, 2021.

A deliberate cross between archive, exhibit, digital narrative, and pedagogical resource, A Journal of the Plague Year (JOTPY) is a fast-growing site of digital primary sources and interpretive documentation related to the coronavirus pandemic. Created by Mark Tebeau, Catherine O’Donnell, and Richard Amesbury at Arizona State University, the project also has dozens of advisers, archivists, technical administrators, curators, fellows, and student interns who manage, curate, and record thousands of submissions.

The “Welcome” page of the site notes that the creators “are acting not just as historians, but as chroniclers, recorders, memoirists, as image collectors.” Indeed, JOTPY is a “rapid response collection”—a living archive—of a broad range of sources, including social media posts, photos, personal reflections, artistic submissions, the beginnings of a podcast series, curated digital exhibits focusing on contributions within specific collections, teaching resources, and a related oral history project curated by the Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis Arts and Humanities Institute. There are also subpages that are divided by countries, regions, and states that allow researchers and casual browsers alike to become more fully immersed in certain record collections.

The menu items at the top of each page make navigation easy. Users can browse stories organized by date, or they can click on “JOTPY Workshop Series” to view recorded workshops and meetings on topics related to the site’s mission. The “Exhibits” tab features a special focus on “LGBTQ Pandemic Stories” and “#CoverYourFangs: Behind the Mask of a University during COVID,” both of which delve more deeply into specific experiences of COVID-19 in these communities. Under the “Explore the Archives” tab, users can find a “Teaching the Pandemic” section with both K–12 and college classroom modules. Another main menu item, “Calls,” includes specific hashtagged suggestions such as “#covidteachers,” “lostgraduations,” or “healthcareheroes” (among others), encouraging people to submit stories or items related to these topics.
The site makes it easy to “share your story about the impact of Covid-19” on a landing page where contributors are asked to give a title, description (categorized as “text story, photograph, video, audio interview, screenshot, drawing, meme, etc.”), and a reflection on what their story or object means in the broader context of the pandemic. Contributors, who have the option to remain anonymous, can also create hashtags and choose a location for their contribution on a world map. Recent entries include “The Scent of a Deli” (https://covid-19archive.org/s/archive/item/36250), where a contributor reflects in a text entry on how the pandemic has reshaped dining and food service operations, literally replacing the “great morning aromas of the deli” with “the stale, cold odors of bleach and sanitizer.” Another recent record shared by contributor Mercury Chang is a painting titled “Reverence to Ophelia” created by Twitter user @sasponella (https://covid-19archive.org/s/archive/item/36238). Viewers can click on the link to the original tweet, as well as view the headings of “Art & Design” and “Social Media (including Memes)” and see the associated tags—“Quarantine Renaissance,” “Twitter,” and “painting.” All submissions are searchable and make use of subject headings and tags to organize the material.

Because the site is in constant flux and development, some pages appear not yet to be live (in mid-January 2021), including the link to the Global Pandemic Map, which is a main menu item. One concrete suggestion for the administrator team would be to include on the “Share Your Story” landing page a short summary of the site’s purpose and mission. It appears that many users will land on this page first, and current navigation requires a separate click to reach the more explicitly detailed “Welcome” page. Repeating some of the information located on the “Welcome” page will make the casual user more aware of the site’s purpose.

Of course, the sheer number and type of resources, secondary documents, and primary sources the site hosts present navigation challenges for the casual user—especially those accessing these items on a phone or with a slow Internet connection—but the team openly notes their awareness of these concerns. Their collection strategy, while expansive and designed to be global, also creates mitigating “archival silences”—gaps, erasures, or omissions in collecting or access that can further harm or exclude marginalized groups. The “Share Your Story” landing page is thoughtfully designed for submissions either via a smartphone or computer.

*JOTPY* is an incredibly useful and valuable resource documenting the collective global experience of health and illness. In the future, the site promises to include more active interpretation of the sources it receives, and it will remain a valuable resource for those seeking a variety of documentation that helps us better understand the complex parameters of a global pandemic.

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