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## Digitizing Feminist and Lesbian Newspapers--and That's Just the Beginning

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*Azenphony Press*

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## Preserving Women's Voices from the Civil Rights and Vietnam Eras

If you plan to attend the “Women’s History in the Digital World 2015” conference at Bryn Mawr College this Thursday and Friday, May 21-22, please plan to attend the panel “Feminist and Lesbian Periodicals in the Digital Age ... Rebroadcasting Our Voices,” which will be held Friday from 1:30 to 3. I will be talking about the underground press digital project that I have been working on for the past four years. Fellow panelists include Julie Enszer, Andrée Rathemacher, and the legendary feminist archivist Laura X.

### Overview of Panel

This panel is about the work that Reveal Digital has been doing for the past four years to digitize important feminist and lesbian archives as a way to preserve women’s history and make it accessible to the current and future generations of activists. It’s no secret among academics that young scholars today look first and primarily to the Internet for sources of information and may be totally unaware of the vast treasures that await them in the back shelves of special collections libraries. Digitizing these treasures is a first step toward making them accessible.

But digitizing alone isn’t enough to ensure accessibility, especially if the resulting digital collections are priced beyond the reaches of academic libraries, which are the primary purchasers of these collections. This is the predicament that libraries face under the traditional economic model employed by traditional publishing companies, which offer digital collections at prices so high that only a small number of libraries can purchase them ever and therefore only their clients have access to them ever. In addition, researchers increasingly want the ability to text-mine digitized content, which requires access to the entire full-text corpus of digitized collections, something that is typically unavailable under the traditional publication model due to intellectual property concerns.

Meanwhile, library budgets strain to keep up with rising prices for print and digital collections.

Reveal Digital has entered this arena with a unique new economic model called [“cost recovery = open access.”](#) Briefly, what we promise is to sell any one collection only until we have earned back enough money to recoup our expenses and salaries and then, after a brief period of exclusivity for those libraries that buy into it, we make that product open access, which means it will be freely available to anyone through simple Internet searching and the full-text content will be available for text mining.

The work described above to digitize women’s papers is part of a larger project—that we call [Independent Voices](#)—to digitize a million pages of underground, alternative, and literary newspapers and magazines from the fifties through the eighties by the end of January 2017. Our motivations are two-fold: to preserve the most important writings of our generation, which are now hidden in dark shelves of special collections libraries and beginning to yellow and crumble with age; and to make them available to current and future generations of scholars and activists.

We originally aimed to include a thousand publications in the collection but we already have surpassed that number. In addition to the approximately 120 feminist and lesbian papers included

so far (see list below following bios), we also have some 130 literary magazines, 600 military underground papers, and 190 campus, community, high school, gay, minority, prisoners' rights, and other underground and alternative papers. We even have 4 papers published by the FBI to sow dissension in the Movement.

With each paper, we are creating an exact keyword-searchable digital reproduction of every page. So far we've uploaded over 250,000 pages. Our goal is to digitize and upload at least three-quarters of a million pages by the end of January 2017 and to go into open access soon after that.

This work couldn't be done without the immense help of a growing team of sourcing libraries that loan us original copies of these papers from their collections after we clear permission from the intellectual property rights holders. Libraries that are on board already include Duke, Northwestern, University of Wisconsin, Michigan State University, Georgia State University, University of Texas-Austin (UT-Austin), University of Buffalo, University of Maryland-Baltimore County, University of Washington, New York University, Bowling Green State University, University of Kansas, University of Arkansas at Little Rock (Sequoyah National Research Center), William Way LGBT Center, University of California-San Diego (UCSD), and University of Illinois, Chicago Public Library, University of Michigan, Oberlin College, University of Connecticut, and California Historical Society. It is not uncommon that for some titles no single library owns a complete run. In those cases, we patch together complete runs from our sourcing libraries that have partial collections. This ability to create aggregate collections is another advantage of digitizing.

Our sourcing libraries receive from us keyword-searchable digital files and the metadata of all titles that they share with us, to do with as they wish, including making them searchable through their websites. We reimburse them for all shipping and handling costs.

Independent Voices is the first collection to be funded through Reveal Digital's cost recovery = open access model. Beyond the Independent Voices project, we are working with SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) to create a SNCC Digital Archive, with Highlander Folk School to digitize their papers from its founding through the Civil Rights era, and with Liberation News Service, the AP-UPI of the underground press, to create a collection that includes their photos and news packets. Other projects are in the conceptual stage.

In the tradition of Kickstarter, Reveal Digital has created a crowd-funding website at <http://revealdigital.com/>. There, we introduce every new project that is under consideration, lay out the individual costs to create the site, reduce the total cost to a per-library cost based on a tiered pricing structure (approximately 20 percent of what libraries would pay a typical digitizing company for a similar collection), and ask for non-binding commitments of support. Once the total of commitments reaches the cost-recovery threshold, we begin the permission-clearance phase.

Libraries that fund any one collection receive early access to that collection, free MARC records, COUNTER compliant usage metrics, and full support for mass text downloading, as well as initial consideration for ideas to make their own collections more widely available through the

cost recovery = open access economic model, without giving up ownership of the resulting digital files.

Libraries have a long tradition of working together for the greater good of the broader library community. In that same tradition, no library is expected to support every Reveal Digital project but every library will have access to every project once they become open access. Thus, libraries supporting this unique new approach to funding the digitization of special collections ensure that access to important cultural material is free and available to all.

You can learn more at <http://voices.revealdigital.com/voices>. Because we aren't yet open access, you can only view the papers on that site if you have access to one of [our supporting libraries](#). However, you can still review a sample of our work at our demo site, <http://demo.revealdigital.com/voices>.

### Panel of presenters:

- **Julie R. Enszer:** Chair/Comment
- **Ken Wachsberger** will introduce and explain the cost recovery = open access economic model—how it works, why it is needed, why it is important for libraries to support it—for digitizing library and other special collections with a focus on the Independent Voices collection of feminist and lesbian papers. He will introduce some of the upcoming projects and the crowd-funding site.
- **Laura X** is known far and wide for her extensive archives that document the women's movement of the late-1960s and early 1970s. This material has been cataloged and microfilmed but is not keyword-searchable. Subsequent materials from Laura's archives have not yet even been cataloged and are not easily accessible despite their immense value to researchers. Laura will talk about the challenges she has had in maintaining her collection, storing the 600 hardcopy boxes, raising funds to have her collection cataloged and then digitized, and how Reveal Digital's cost recovery = open access economic model could bring her that funding.
- **Andrée Rathemacher**, acquisitions librarian at the University of Rhode Island, advocates for the University Libraries' support of several collaborative open access initiatives including Reveal Digital. She will talk about her commitment to open access as well as the reasons why it is crucial that libraries channel their resources to support and facilitate open access to scholarship and unique primary source materials.

### Bios:

**Julie R Enszer** is a poet and Visiting Assistant Scholar, Department of Women's Studies, at University of Maryland. Her scholarship is at the intersection of U.S. history and literature with particular attention to twentieth century U.S. feminist and lesbian histories, literatures, and cultures. By examining lesbian print culture with the tools of history and literary studies, she reconsiders histories of the Women's Liberation Movement and gay liberation. Her book

manuscript, *A Fine Bind: Lesbian-Feminist Publishing from 1969 through 2009*, tells stories of a dozen lesbian-feminist publishers to consider the meaning of the theoretical and political formations of lesbian-feminism, separatism, and cultural feminism. Enszer is the author of two collections of poetry, *Sisterhood* (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2013) and *Handmade Love* (A Midsummer Night's Press, 2010). She is editor of *Milk & Honey: A Celebration of Jewish Lesbian Poetry* (A Midsummer Night's Press, 2011). *Milk & Honey* was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in Lesbian Poetry. She is the editor of *Sinister Wisdom*, a multicultural lesbian literary and art journal, and a regular book reviewer for the *Lambda Book Report* and *Calyx*.

**Ken Wachsberger** is an internationally known author, editor, and speaker as well as a renowned expert on the [Vietnam era underground and alternative press](#). Ken is a book contract advisor with the [National Writers Union](#) and a frequent lecturer on the topics of contracts and copyright. He is the former editor or managing editor of several peer-reviewed publications from Pierian Press and MCB University Press. During his tenure as Contracts and Copyright Manager with Reveal Digital, Ken has led the drive to identify and obtain permission for over 1,200 underground, alternative, and literary newspapers and magazines from the fifties through the eighties to be part of Reveal's Independent Voices digital project, including some 120 feminist and lesbian papers.

**Laura X** began collecting first political materials in 1964 as part of her activist archivist work during the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, and then primarily literature on women and women's health and legal issues starting in 1968. Two years later she founded the Women's History Research Center, which maintained the International Women's History Archive, an internationally recognized collection of periodicals, pamphlets, songs, leaflets, and other materials that document the women's movement of the late-1960s until July 1974. Laura published *SPAZM*, the only national women's liberation newsletter from April through December 1969; and was an original member of *It Aint Me Babe*, the first national newspaper of the Women's Liberation Movement. She founded the National Clearinghouse on Marital and Date Rape in 1978 and the next year led the successful campaign to criminalize marital rape in California. She served as consultant coordinator to campaigns that by 1993 successfully eradicated exemptions from prosecution for marital, date, and cohabitation rape in the remaining 44 states (there were five before California). Last year she founded the Laura X Institute <http://www.lauraxinstitute.org/> to house her Social Movements Archives from the women's movement and overlapping social movements, which she has never stopped collecting.

**Andrée J. Rathemacher** is Professor and Head of Acquisitions in the University Libraries at the University of Rhode Island, where she manages the materials budget of approximately \$4 million. An advocate of open access and scholarly communication reform, she chaired the University's Ad-Hoc Committee on Open Access in 2012-2013 and played an instrumental role in the passage of an open access policy by the University of Rhode Island faculty. She currently serves as the Faculty Senate Designate for the URI Open Access Policy. In 2013-2014 she initiated the creation of the URI Open Access Fund and is the fund administrator. She advocates for the University Libraries' support of collaborative open access initiatives such as SCOAP3, Knowledge Unlatched, Reveal Digital, and the Open Library of Humanities. She is currently Co-Chair of the ACRL New England Chapter Scholarly Communications Special Interest Group.

## Feminist and Lesbian Papers Already in the Digital Collection

*13th Moon, Aegis; Ain't I a Woman (Iowa City); Amazon; Amazon Quarterly: A Lesbian Feminist Arts Journal; And Aint I a Woman (Seattle); Aphra; B.A.D. (Big Apple Dyke) News; BattleActs; Big Mama Rag; Black Belt Woman: The Magazine for Women in the Martial Arts and Self Defense; Black Maria; Black Woman's Voice; Branching Out; Bread & Roses; Chrysalis, Common Lives/Lesbian Lives; Conditions; Connexions: An International Women's Quarterly; Country Women; CWLU News: Newsletter of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (and three papers associated with CWLU: Womankind, Blazing Star, and Secret Storm); Dayton Women's Liberation Newsletter, Distaff; Dyke, A Quarterly; Dykes & Gorgons; Echo of Sappho, Everywoman; The Eye; Female Studies Series; Feminary; Feminist Alliance Against Rape; Feminist Art Journal, Feminist Bookstore News/Feminist Bookstore Newsletter; Feminist Voice; Feminist Women's Health Center Newsletter; From the Ground Up: A Seattle Feminist Newspaper; The Furies; Heresies: A Feminist Journal on Arts and Politics; Her-self; HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture; Houston Breakthrough: Where Women Are News; Hysteria; IKON; It Aint Me Babe; Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media, Killer Dyke; KNOW; The Ladder; Lady Unique Inclination of the Night; Lavender Vision; Lavender Woman; Lesbian Connection; The Lesbian Insider/Inside Her/Inciter; Lesbian News; Lesbian Tide; Lilith; Marin Women's Newsletter/News Journal; The Matriarchist; Matrices; Media Report to Women; Meeting Ground; Mom's Apple Pie; Motive (feminist issue, lesbian issue); National Communication Network for the Elimination of Violence against Women, New Directions for Women; New Women's Times; New York Radical Feminists Newsletter; Newsreport; No More Fun and Games: A Journal of Female Liberation; Notes from the [First/Second/Third]Year; off our backs; On Our Backs; Paid My Dues, Pandora, Quest/a feminist quarterly; Radical Chick; The Second Page, Second Wave: A Magazine for the New Feminism; Sinister Wisdom; Sojourner; SPAZM; The Spokeswoman; Tell-a-Woman; Tooth and Nail; Tribad; Triple Jeopardy; Union W.A.G.E., Up From Under, Voices of the Women's Liberation Movement; WomaNews; Woman's World; WomanSpirit; Women: A Journal of Liberation; Women and Art; Women and Their Bodies/Our Bodies Ourselves; Women in Print Newsletter; Women Organizing; Women's News...For a Change; The Women's Page; and Women's Press. Also to be included is the groundbreaking paper "a kind of memo" (later published in *Liberation* as "Sex and Caste"), written by Mary King and Casey Hayden.*