Interim Performance Report

Grant No. NAR10-RB-50084-10

Eliminating Archival Backlogs

Project Director: Dennis Meissner

Minnesota Historical Society

July 29, 2011

Overview of second reporting period: January-June 2011

The overarching goal of the Minnesota Historical Society's Eliminating Archival Backlogs project is to expose the ten percent of our currently hidden government records and manuscript collection to public discovery and access, while positioning our program to function without such backlogs following the project's conclusion.

While the initial reporting period (July-December 2010) was affected by a late project start (October 18) and ramp-up costs (time lost to training, team configuration, and workflow adjustments), we clearly hit our stride in the second reporting period and achieved notable results throughout it. In particular, over the course of the six-month period, we achieved a processing productivity rate of 1 hour per cubic foot for government records and 2.5 hours per cubic foot for manuscript collections. And it is important to note that we achieved this efficiency level without compromising the quality of our description. The achievement of this level of productivity will propel our project forward to what we believe will be a very successful conclusion, and will define our expectations for processing efficiency in the years ahead.

I would also like to emphasize that our project team achieved this productivity while at the same time producing many more finding aids and catalog records than we had originally committed ourselves to creating, and while also dealing with our first significant body of natively digital materials. In the latter case we were able to process and describe the materials very expeditiously, including providing finding aid links to the 2,184 electronic documents.

The second reporting period also witnessed the first significant upticks in both retrievals of archival containers for researchers in our reading room and visitation to our finding aid web pages. Comparing the number of archival containers retrieved for reading room patrons in Fiscal Year 2011 (July-June) with results for Fiscal Year 2010, we see a 9% increase. When we examine web statistics for our online EAD finding aids, we see a 7.7% increase in the number of visits, a 7% increase in the number of individual pages viewed, and a whopping 16.7% increase in the total number of pageviews. Although it is certainly early days on that score, we are hopeful that these statistics augur real increases in audience impact as a result of our project.

The last several days in the reporting period were partly spent in preparing for a cessation of work in the event of a Minnesota state government shutdown. The shutdown did, in fact, happen and it sidelined our project, and all of the Society's programs, for a period of three weeks (14 work days). This loss of working days will have some negative effect on the next reporting period. It will also add to the length of the extension that we will request toward the scheduled end of the project.

Performance to project deliverables

1. Submit complete reports by the deadlines in the Grant Award Summary. This is the second of three reports to NHPRC. We intend to stay on top of this responsibility.

2. Acknowledge the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in all print and electronic products that result from grant support. The Commission strongly encourages grantees to use the NHPRC logo in grant products and publications and to link to its website. The final narrative reports must include three copies of grant products. We have been acknowledging NHPRC's support

in all of our finding aids and other enduring products of the grant, as well as in all of the publicity materials that appear about the project. We will continue to do so in all respects throughout the life of the project. Our use of the NHPRC citation and logo on all of our EAD finding aids produced as a result of this project is illustrated in the "Administrative Information" section of this example, a series from the records of [Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty](#). In addition, we have created a separate [landing page](#) for all of the finding aids created as a result of this project, which briefly describes the project and acknowledges the crucial support of NHPRC. This landing page, in addition to publicizing the project to a wide audience, also gives us another discovery pathway into our archival finding aids and creates a searchable index into all the finding aids. We believe that it will help us to promote the project and drive access.
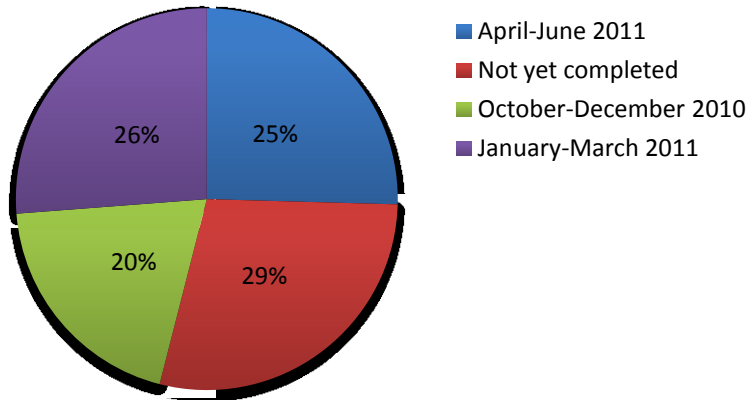
3.   Publicize the project and its methods through press releases, web 2.0 resources, blog entries, announcements on appropriate listservs, an article in at least one publication, and at least one presentation about the project. While press releases to professional publications went out during the first reporting period, the second period continues our use of Wikipedia to drive access to certain collections processed via the grant. In addition, the project director has publicized the NHPRC grant and our positive early experiences in a variety of podium presentations: as a case study example in the SAA workshop *Implementing MPLP* (April 15), at the OCLC Global Delegates Council annual meeting (Dublin, OH, April 12), at the Midwest Archives Conference annual meeting (April 29), at the Kentucky Council on Archives annual meeting (May 20), and at the Association of Canadian Archivists annual meeting (June 3).

4.   Process at least 4,700 cubic feet of records, including 3,100 cubic feet of government records and 1,600 cubic feet of manuscript collections. In the initial interim report, we noted our completion of 518 cubic feet or 11% of the project goal. With the next six months' shift from ramp-up to full operating speed we completed an additional 1,573 cubic feet, resulting in the complete processing of 45% of the project total by volume. The work completed during the reporting period comprises 1,101 cubic feet of government records and 472 cubic feet of manuscripts. Because of our late start, only 44% of the intended project timeline has elapsed, which puts us slightly ahead of our target for the reporting period. Because of the significant increase in productivity achieved in the second reporting period, we are confident that we will easily achieve the overall project cubic footage target. Below are tables and charts that represent our processing progress to date:

Acquisitions: 71% Complete
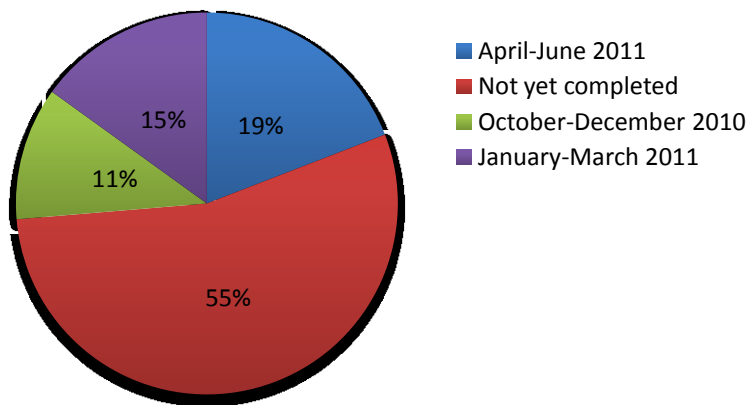
NHPRC Target: 515 Acquisitions
Completed: 368 Acquisitions

- April-June 2011: 25%
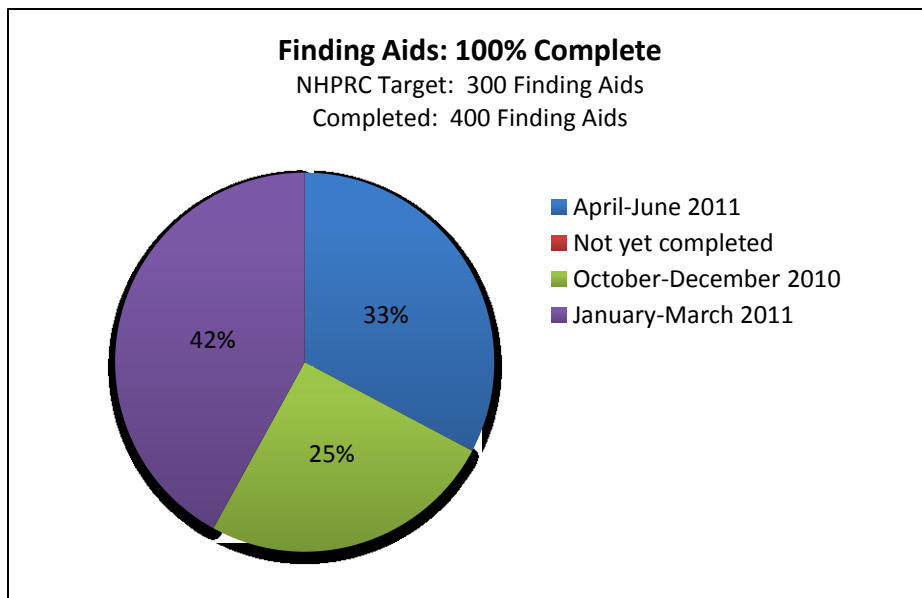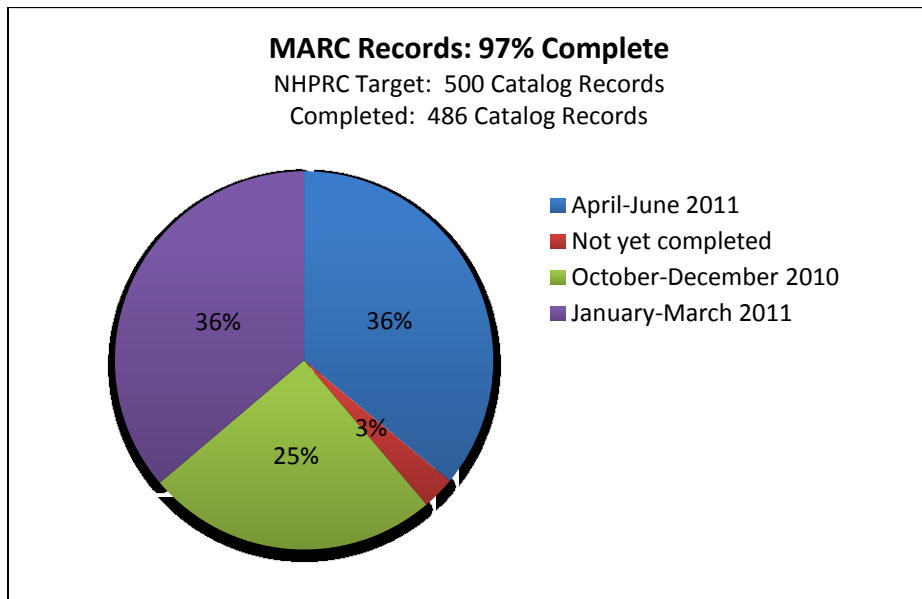- Not yet completed: 29%
- October-December 2010: 20%
- January-March 2011: 26%

Cubic Feet: 45% Complete

NHPRC Target : 4700 Cubic Feet
Completed: 2,091 Cubic Feet

- April-June 2011: 19%
- Not yet completed: 55%
- October-December 2010: 11%
- January-March 2011: 15%
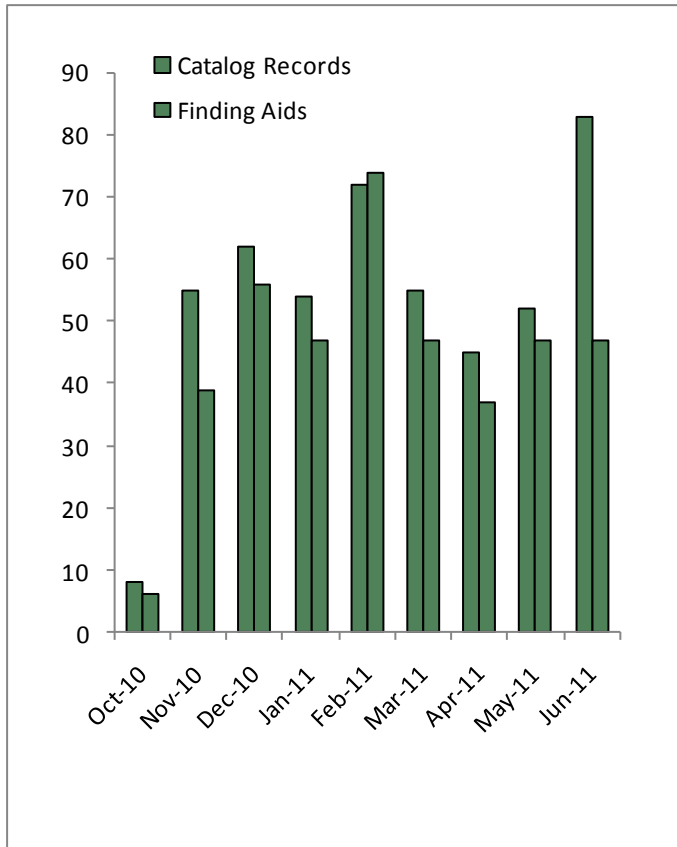
5.   Create or revise at least 300 EAD finding aids and at least 500 MARC catalog records and post them to the historical society's OPAC and to national bibliographic databases including OCLC and a web accessible repository of EAD finding aids. During the reporting period we greatly exceeded our targets for creating descriptive surrogates. The project staff created 361 MARC catalog records, all of which were entered into our local MnPALS system, which serves not only our own OPAC, but also academic and public libraries across Minnesota. The records were also loaded into OCLC WorldCat. Combined with the 125 catalog records created in the initial reporting period, the project has now nearly achieved its stated goal of 500 records for the entire project. Of course, we will continue creating and updating MARC records for all the materials processed during the remainder of the

project. The team also created 299 EAD finding aids during the reporting period which, when added to the 101 created in the initial period already exceeds the overall projected total of 300 finding aids. So, over the course of the project we will be able to create or update many more archival finding aids than we projected in our grant application. The disparity between the numbers projected in the application and the number of descriptive surrogates that we are actually producing or updating is largely explained by the mechanics of government records transfers, any single accession of which may yield multiple separate records series. It can be very difficult to predict and, in fact, a recently completed State Archives acquisition yielded 25 discrete series of processed records. In the application, we clearly underestimated the number of discrete record series that would result from the government records acquisitions in the backlog.

MARC Records: 97% Complete
NHPRC Target: 500 Catalog Records
Completed: 486 Catalog Records

- April-June 2011
- Not yet completed
- October-December 2010
- January-March 2011

36%   36%
25%   3%

Finding Aids: 100% Complete
NHPRC Target: 300 Finding Aids
Completed: 400 Finding Aids

- April-June 2011
- Not yet completed
- October-December 2010
- January-March 2011

42%   33%
25%

Catalog Records
Finding Aids

|	Oct-10	Nov-10	Dec-10	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11
Catalog Records	8	55	62	54	72	55	45	52	83
Finding Aids	6	39	56	47	74	47	37	47	47

6. Track processing rates during the course of the project. As noted in the previous report, we have been carefully tracking processing rates throughout the project and now have some preliminary findings that we can share. Over the course of the project to date we have achieved average productivity rates of 1 hour per cubic foot for government records and 2.5 hours per cubic foot for manuscript collections. These average figures include all phases of processing including appraisal, arrangement, re-housing, cataloging, and finding aid production. So, approaching the halfway point in the project we are achieving productivity quite superior to our anticipated processing efficiency of four hours per cubic foot. We will continue to monitor these rates closely throughout the course of the project.

7. Design and track e-metrics to measure use of the project's digital products and services. Since the project began, we have been using Google Analytics to evaluate the use of EAD finding aids by online searchers. Our surmise is that by increasing the number of finding aids that are web searchable, we will not only facilitate online discovery, but will also drive reading room access. When we examine web statistics for our online EAD finding aids, we see a 7.7% increase in the number of visits, a 7% increase in the number of individual pages viewed, and a whopping 16.7% increase in the total number of pageviews when Fiscal Year 2011 results are compared with those from Fiscal Year 2010. And an overall 9% increase in the number of archival containers retrieved for researchers suggests that this increase in discoverability is translating into greater audience

impacts in terms of use of archival collections. These results must certainly be seen as very preliminary, so we will be watching the data closely to see whether this pattern holds.

MHS Archival Collections
Monthly Number of Boxes Retrieved

MHS Finding Aids Website
Monthly Number of Visits
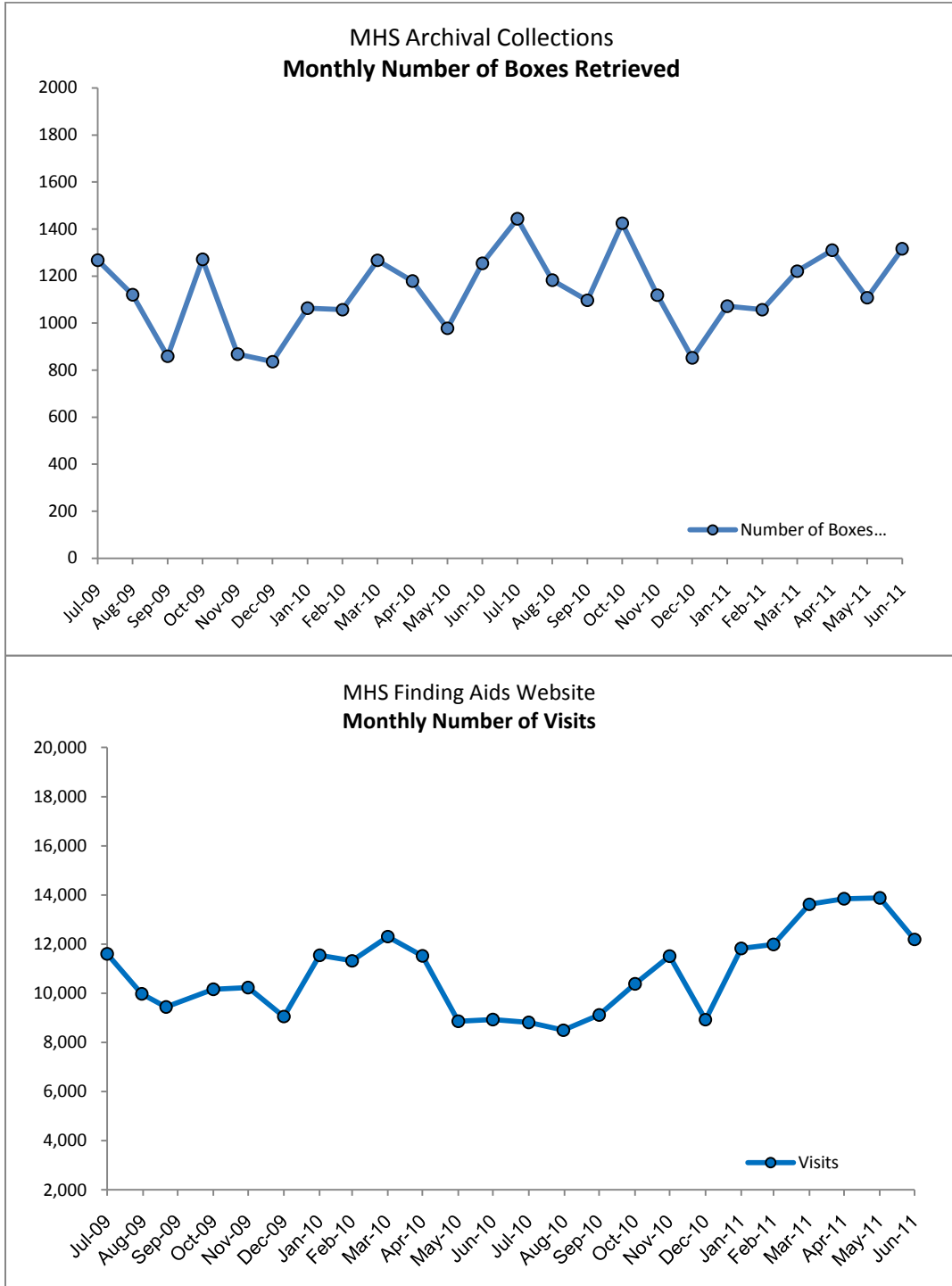
MHS Finding Aids Website
Monthly Number of Pages Viewed
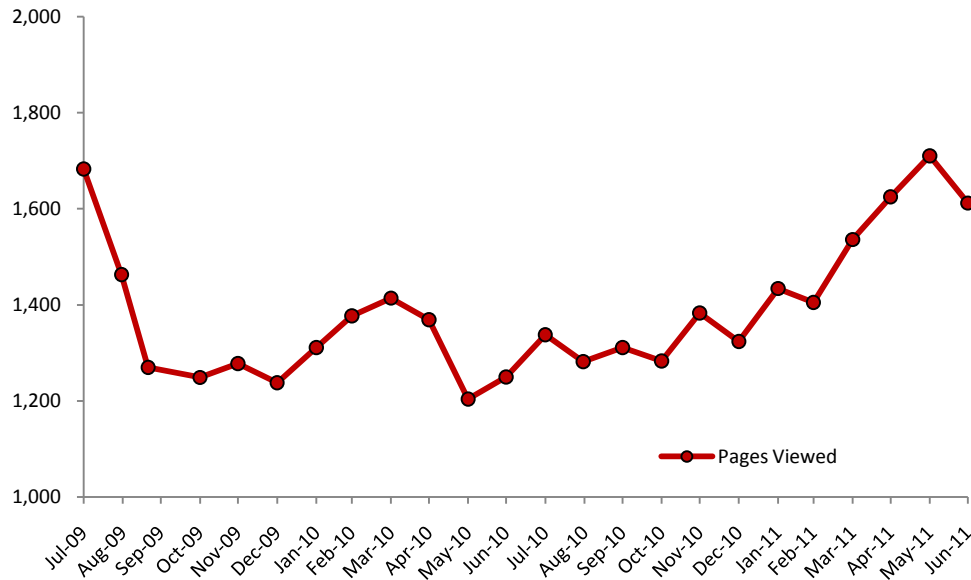
MHS Finding Aids Website
Monthly Number of Pageviews

8
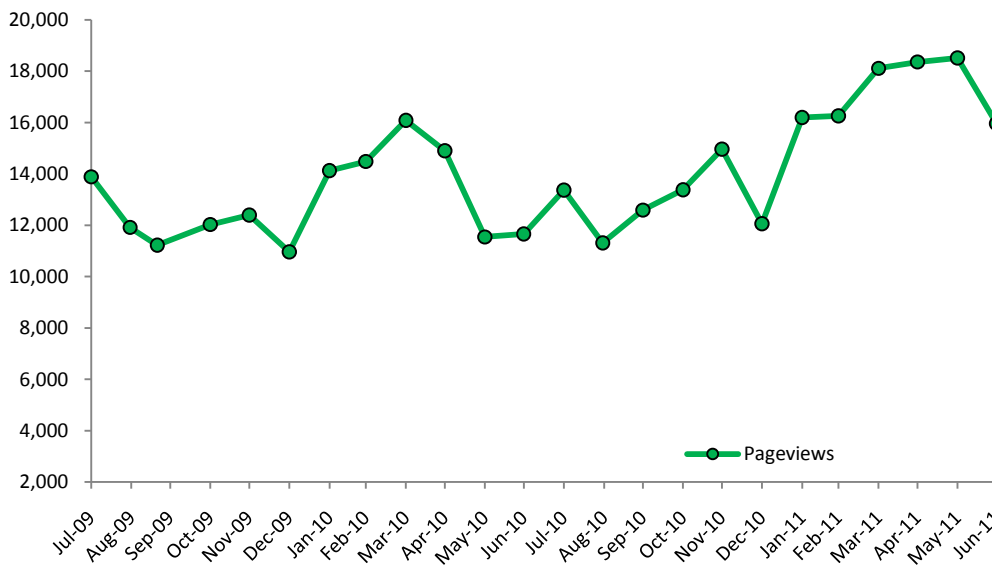
Appendix
Following is a table that enumerates many of the specific data that are only briefly summarized in this report.

Monthly Processing Totals

Government Records	Accessions	Cubic Feet	Microfilm	E-Records	Catalog Records	Finding Aids
Oct-10	6	39.33			5	5
Nov-10	13	52.75	201		38	24
Dec-10	30	245.27			40	37
Jan-11	13	110.05			30	27
Feb-11	16	258.35		1,746	41	54
Mar-11	13	60.05	163	438	35	30
Apr-11	8	66.60			19	19
May-11	10	118.10			25	22
Jun-11	8	488.15	1126		45	36
Total	**117**	**1438.65**	**1490**	**2184**	**278**	**254**

Manuscripts	Accessions	Cubic Feet	Microfilm	E-Records	Catalog Records	Finding Aids
Oct-10	3	2.50			3	1
3Nov-10	19	146.35			17	15
Dec-10	31	32.20			22	19
Jan-11	34	72.45	3		24	20
Feb-11	34	100.55	1		31	20
Mar-11	25	91.10			20	17
Apr-11	33	74.20			26	18
May-11	32	109.20			27	25
Jun-11	40	23.80			38	11
Total	**251**	**652.35**	**4**	**0**	**208**	**146**

Project Total	Accessions	Cubic Feet	Microfilm	E-Records	Catalog Records	Finding Aids	Wikipedia Links
Oct-10	9	41.83	0	0	8	6	
Nov-10	32	199.10	201	0	55	39	
Dec-10	61	277.47	0	0	62	56	16
Jan-11	47	182.50	3	0	54	47	2
Feb-11	50	358.90	1	1746	72	74	3
Mar-11	38	151.15	163	438	55	47	3
Apr-11	41	140.80	0	0	45	37	6
May-11	42	227.30	0	0	52	47	3
Jun-11	48	511.95	1126	0	83	47	5
Total	**368**	**2091.00**	**1494**	**2184**	**486**	**400**	**38**