

## Breaking through the backlog: Using AI to accelerate processing, preservation and accessibility of special collections & archives

### Meet your speaker



Syed Amaanullah

Senior Product Manager JSTOR | ITHAKA

Syed Amaanullah is a Senior Product Manager at ITHAKA. He currently leads ITHAKA's efforts to utilize AI in making special collections and archival processing more efficient for libraries and cultural institutions around the world. Along with this exciting new initiative, Syed has been instrumental in the development and strategy of ITHAKA's Infrastructure Services portfolio of products and services over the last several years, including the launch of Shared and Preserved Collections in 2023.

Prior to joining ITHAKA in 2020, Syed has served as a product leader at reputable organizations in the United States of America, including ProQuest, the University of Michigan and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

**JSTOR** 

We are a not-for-profit with a mission to improve access to knowledge and education for people around the world.



### Guiding principles



We use technology in ways that **uphold our** values.



We proceed cautiously and don't get ahead of our understanding.

We empower people, we do not replace them.

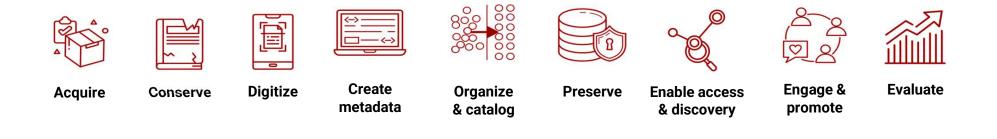


We collaborate and share knowledge with **the academic community**.



# The digital collections stewardship landscape

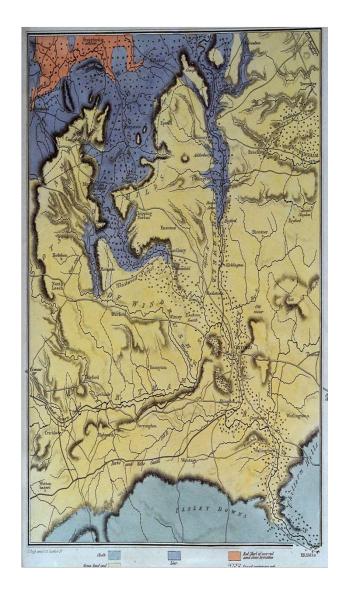
### Digital collections workflow



### The challenges

What we've heard:

- **Born-digital growth exceeds capacity:** rapid pace of acquisition surpasses libraries' ability to process and manage these collections
- Unprocessed backlog of digital collections: as much as 95% of collections remain unprocessed due to volume and resource constraints
- Limited resources: stewardship is a fundamental library responsibility competing with broader institutional priorities, leaving time-consuming, highly-technical workflows under-resourced
- **Fragmented solution landscape:** ecosystem of specialized systems and tools with costly commercial offerings and unstable open-source options lacking adequate support



# Understand and describe with our collections processing tool

A transformative digital collections processing solution that leverages AI to significantly unlock contributor backlogs, accelerate the efficiency of processing workflows and amplify the expertise of archivists and special collections librarians.

Upload your files, add context, and generate metadata fields for your uploaded n	naterials.
	NAME YOUR UPLOAD *
	Untitled Upload - October 8, 2024 at 10:07 PM EDT
	GIVE US CONTEXT TO HELP THE METADATA GENERATION PROCESS (OPTIONAL)
The set of t	ex. "These are newspapers from the Daily Journal with photographs of the painter Georgia O'Keefe and were written by Sarah Goodman."
0 files added for upload	
No files added yet	Generate Metadata

() Keep this tab open while your files are uploading	
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Preparing to upload files	

#### **III**JSTOR Syed.amaanullah@ithaka.org | Log Out Bristol Sample Upload - October 9, 2024 at 10:56 PM EDT Settings ~ Summary Al-Generated This archival collection features a diverse array of photographs and handwritten letters that capture moments from daily life across various cultures and time periods. Highlights include images of # of items uploaded # of metadata records generated # of items generated agricultural practices, urban street scenes, and serene landscapes, alongside personal letters 14 14 142 discussing everyday matters. The collection provides a rich visual and textual narrative, offering insights into the social, cultural, and economic activities of the 20th century, with a focus on both rural and urban settings. Each item, ranging from photographs of street vendors to letters from London, contributes to a broader understanding of historical contexts and personal experiences. Show less Upload Report DESCRIPTION DOCUMENT CONFIDENCE TITLE CREATOR VOLUME ISSUE DATE LANGUAGE SUBJECT T DM3195-1-2-1-9-0.56 Man Watering ca. 20th The photograph captures a man carrying two Unknown P 001.jpg Field in Rural watering cans as he walks across a field. The scene century is framed by tree branches and leaves, giving a sense Landscape of depth and natural enclosure. The background reveals a rural landscape with trees and possibly cultivated land. The man appears to be engaged in agricultural work, suggesting a setting in a farming community. The image is part of a collection from the University of Bristol archives, providing a glimpse into rural life. Confidence: 0.48 Confidence: 1.00 Confidence: N/A Confidence: N/A Confidence: 0.83 Confidence: 0.00 Confidence: 0.56 Confidence: 0.00 Cc DM3195-1-2-1-2- 0.57 Street Unknown 1970s This photograph depicts two women seated on the Pł 001.jpg Vendors ground, preparing food at a street-side location. They Preparing are surrounded by large bowls filled with shredded Food vegetables, likely for sale. A child can be seen standing nearby, adding to the bustling street scene. The setting suggests a market or busy street in an urban area, with various items and people visible in the background. The image captures a moment of daily life and commerce. Confidence: 0.78 Confidence: 1.00 Confidence: N/A Confidence: N/A Confidence: 0.51 Confidence: 0.00 Confidence: 0.51 Confidence: 0.00 Cc letter.jpg 0.70 Letter from 22 Unknown Unknown English A handwritten letter addressed to a 'Miss Roy' from Le Launceston 22 Launceston Place, London W8 5RL. The letter Place, London discusses concerns regarding manuscripts and mentions a museum. The writer asks for advice on how to proceed with certain matters.

#### Your Uploads / Untitled Upload - Thurs Jan 20th, 2023 4:50 PM The James M. Lawson Collection: Civil Rights, Settings ~ Nonviolence, and Community Engagement Summary Al-Generated The James M. Lawson Collection is a rich archival resource that documents the life and work of Reverend James M. Lawson, a prominent civil rights leader and advocate for nonviolence. This # of metadata fields created les uploaded # of items created collection includes a diverse array of materials such as speeches, sermons, correspondence, 8 80 photographs, and .event programs that reflect Lawson's commitment to social justice, community empowerment, and the principles of nonviolent resistance. Spanning several decades, the collection captures significant moments in American history, particularly during the civil rights movement, and highlights Lawson's influential role in various initiatives and organizations. Show less Upload Details ✓ User Input Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Donec ut ullamcorper augue. Sed dapibus, metus ac vestibulum elementum, tellus eros pulvinar lorem, egestas mattis felis ex sit amet tortor. In feugiat tellus non augue suscipit feugiat nec in neque. Mauris at nisl ut velit fringilla tristique. Donec sed odio ipsum. Morbi porta urna sed purus bibendum, ut cursus elit porta. Integer et risus eget turpis euismod mollis eu vel mi. Nulla facilisi. Nunc in diam sed risus placerat malesuada. Aliquam vestibulum dictum lectus. Aliquam id porta est. Morbi odio odio, faucibus at velit vitae, commodo pretium turpis. Sed placerat nunc velit. Sed rhoncus id magna eget sodales. Aenean lacinia lobortis dui in tincidunt. bibendum mi. Phasellus non fermentum diam. Morbi vitae tristique nunc, ac blandit ligula. Aenean imperdiet felis non augue pharetra maximus. Quisque ut magna sit amet leo ultricies elementum. Mauris non ligula nec ligula elementum vehicula molestie sed odio. Aenean luctus velit nibh, vel maximus arcu condimentum in. ✓ More Details Metadata Schemas Created: Metadata:

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			I-06-12 Letter arbara nan	Letter to Senator Barbara Lorman	Thomas Fick	•	-	1964-1968	English	A collection of newspaper clippings and articles discussing the establishment and location of new University of Wisconsin centers and college sites in the years 1964 to 1968.	County, Racial issues
			I-06-12 Letter arbara man	Confidence: 0.84 Letter to Senator Barbara Lorman	Confidence: 0.84	Confidence: N/A	Confidence: N/A	Confidence: 0.84	Confidence: 0.8	A collection of newspaper clippings and articles discussing the establishment and location of new University of Wisconsin centers and college sites in the years 1964 to 1968.	County, Racial issues
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						Confidence: N/A			college sites in the years 1964 to 1968.			
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	241	Al-Generated Edited Reviewed	
	Q: Jim, when Doctor Martin Luther King was killed can	CHANGE LOG	
	you just tell us when you heard the news what ran	Edited by Jane Doe on Sept 9th, 2024	
	through your head, your immediate reactions. Why did	Generated by AI on Sept 9th, 2024	
10	you think this has happened and who did you think was		
- AND PARTY	responsible for it?	✓ Metadata fields	
	A: Well you have to understand that (coughs) that er, my	TITLE	
1 1	immediate reactions on April the 4th were not like that	1968 re: MLK assassination (2 versions)	
S. C. Star Dallas	because number one I was chairperson of the strategy	Confidence: 1.00	
	committee of the strike which meant therefore that I had	CREATOR	
	um, very clear sense of responsibility for the		
	continuation of the strike and its undergurding so my	Vanderbilt University Confidence: 1.00	
	immediate reaction was to push out of my mind the	C SEVICO DARE SELECT	
	assassination itself, that is to put it aside. While on	VOLUME	
	April the 4th that evening as I heard the news and all I	-	
	immediately er, moved to make certain that we would	Confidence: N/A	
	march on Friday morning and to call the black community	ISSUE	
	to calm and poise but more importantly to continue the	-	
	work of the strike as the best way of our honouring	Confidence: N/A	
The second	Martin King. (instructions)	DATE	
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1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1	English	
		Confidence: 0.8	

#### **I**STOR

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Untitled Upload - Thurs Jan 20th, 2023 4:50 PM

#### Summary Al-Generated

The James M. Lawson Collection is a rich archival resource that documents the life and work of Reverend James M. Lawson, a prominent civil rights leader and advocate for nonviolence. This collection includes a diverse array of materials such as speeches, sermons, correspondence... Show more

#### Generated Metadata Upload Details

	THUMBNAIL	ITEM	TITLE	CREATOR	VOLUME
2		1991-06-12 Letter to Barbara Lorman	Letter to Senator Barbara Lorman	Thomas Fick	
			Confidence: 0.84	Confidence: 0.84	Confidence: N/A
2		1991-06-12 Letter to Barbara Lorman	Letter to Senator Barbara Lorman	Thomas Fick	
			Confidence: 0.84	Confidence: 0.84	Confidence: N/A
		1991-06-12 Letter to Barbara Lorman	Letter to Senator Barbara Lorman	Thomas Fick	

### ×



#### **Replace fields**

Replace the values of existing fields. You can also delete all existing values by inputting {Delete}.

Example: "Creator: James Brown" → "Creator: Marilyn Freer"

#### Metadata fields

FIELD		VALUE	
Title	~	Enter your values here	Ū
FIELD		VALUE	
Creator 🗸		Enter your values here	Ū
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#### **Collection Overview**

- Title of the collection: The James M. Lawson Collection: Civil Rights, Nonviolence, and Community Engagement
- Date(s) of the collection: 1945 2009
- Extent of the collection: Approximately 300 items, including documents, photographs, programs, and correspondence.
- Abstract: This collection encompasses a diverse array of materials related to the life and work of Reverend James M. Lawson, Jr., a promiment civil rights leader and advocate for nonviolence. It includes sermons, correspondence, event programs, and newspaper clippings that document Lawson's contributions to the civil rights movement, his theological reflections, and his involvement in various community initiatives.
- Creator(s) of the collection: Reverend James M. Lawson, Jr. and various contributors.
- Language(s) of the materials: English.

#### **Biographical/Historical Note**

Reverend James M. Lawson, Jr. is a key figure in the American civil rights movement, known for his commitment to nonviolent protest and social justice. He played a significant role in the Nashville sit-ins and was a close associate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lawson's work extends beyond civil rights to include education, community organizing, and religious leadership, particularly within the United Methodist Church.

#### Scope and Content Note

The collection includes:

- Sermons and Religious Texts: Reflecting Lawson's theological perspectives and his advocacy for social justice.
- Correspondence: Letters to and from Lawson, detailing his engagements with various organizations and individuals in the civil rights movement.
- Event Programs: Materials from significant events, including memorial services, church services, and community gatherings.
- Photographs: Documenting Lawson's participation in civil rights activities and community events.
- Newspaper Clippings: Articles covering civil rights issues, community events, and Lawson's contributions.

#### Arrangement

- The collection is organized into series based on document type:
- 1. Sermons and Religious Texts
- 2. Correspondence
- 3. Event Programs
- 4. Photographs
- 5. Newspaper Clippings

#### **Detailed Description**

- Series 1: Sermons and Religious Texts
- Sermon on Methodism and Christian Discipline (1966)
- Following Jesus Today (1998)
- The Vital Link for Re-Birth (1975)

#### Series 2: Correspondence

Letter from Peter A. Kuryla to Reverend James M. Lawson, Jr. (2002)

#### Invitation to Dr. James M. Lawson, Jr. for Ministers' Week 1983 (1981) Correspondence regarding the Ecumenical Institute Course (1973)

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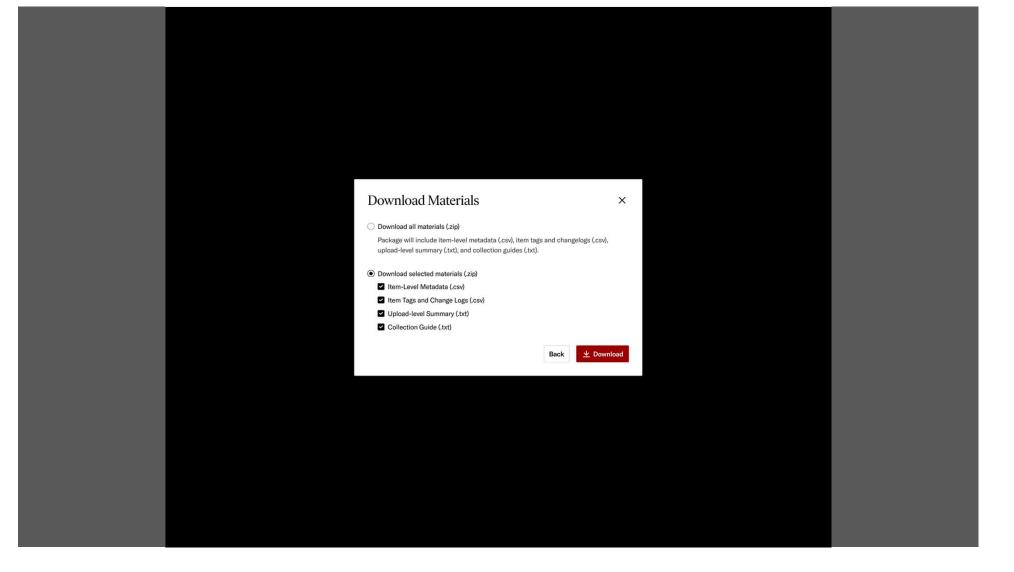
#### Series 3: Event Programs

- Holman United Methodist Church Christmas Program (1994)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Prayer Breakfast Program (1997)
- Freedom Sings Program (2004)

#### Series 4: Photographs

- Photographs and Documents from the Civil Rights Era (1960s)
- Group Gathering at Temeku Clubhouse Honoring Dr. Jim Lawson (2007)
- Series 5: Newspaper Clippings
  - Collection of Newspaper Clippings on Segregation and Civil Rights (1962)
  - Press Release: Lawyers Guild Clinic Targets Police Abuse (1993)

This collection serves as a vital resource for understanding the intersection of faith, activism, and community engagement in the context of the civil rights movement and beyond.





Creator	Unknown Confidence: 0.99
Title	Barbados Polo Article with Annotations Confidence: 0.56
Date	<b>1977-03-11</b> Confidence: 0.98
Туре	Newspaper Article Confidence: 0.57
Description	A newspaper article from March 11, 1977, discussing the popularity of polo in Barbados compared to England. The article is titled 'Grainne Kearns: There are more polo players per capita in Barbados than there are in England.' It includes photographs of polo players and is annotated with handwritten notes addressed to 'Thomas' from 'Fel.' The notes express personal sentiments and mention a shared interest in polo. Confidence: 0.67
Coverage	style: Journalistic, culture: British, period: 1970s, location: Barbados Confidence: 0.94
Publisher	Unknown Confidence: 0.90
Language	English Confidence: 1.00



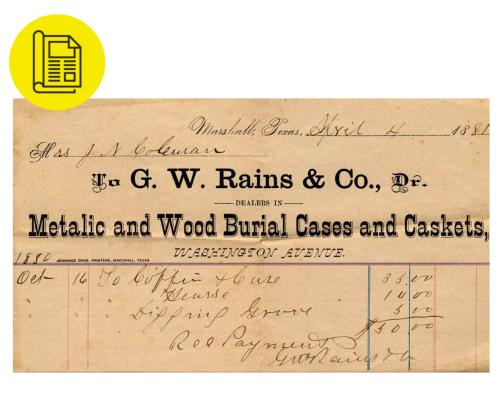
Creator	<b>Unknown</b> Confidence: 1.00
Title	Fish Drying Process in Urban Setting Confidence: 0.72
Date	ca. 1970s Confidence: 0.76
Туре	Photograph Confidence: 0.98
Description	The image depicts a scene of fish drying in an urban area, likely in an Asian city during the 1970s. A person is seen tending to rows of fish laid out on wooden racks under the sun. In the background, there are residential buildings, suggesting a blend of traditional and modern practices. The setting includes hanging fish and an outdoor setup typical of small-scale fish processing. The presence of a gas cylinder suggests some level of modernization in the process. Confidence: 0.50
Coverage	style: Documentary, culture: Asian, period: 20th century, location: Asia Confidence: 0.92
Publisher	
Language	

SS Dieseashd. 5008 22 tobuar, 1976. )earest delighted to lave your letter This enount - and I hasten to send found some alter, not very Otre Lode - Th Tar God Colour pictures in and Casent yandon Nogramme which I have cut and wiched ( to faire weight ) - Wardented your day " Sender - I Drapht it way hoppan after talling to treadice and Billy chopped on New years ere. - Dont he silly -of Carrie you cand do a thew are - as you Sugget - that is of your Irealthe should up - but after the N.Y. are is aver you will find you are "IN TRAINING" Sandy the last at is led insumantalle? Pir mas managed ware than are airy galace - So you Can too Mentare the idea of it straiting in the 18th Cent and ending in the Early 19th. Will entrate . - Could be beautiful in your hands. - the product in they

Creator	Unknown Confidence: 1.00
Title	Letter from Meadow Lodge Confidence: 0.75
Date	<b>1976-02-22</b> Confidence: 1.00
Туре	Letter Confidence: 0.80
Description	This handwritten letter, dated February 22, 1976, is addressed to 'Oliver' from a sender at Meadow Lodge, 55 Meadow Rd., SW8. The letter expresses delight in receiving a previous letter and mentions sending a picture. It discusses various personal and social topics, including plans for New Year's Eve and thoughts on a production in Greece. The letter is written on paper with ink and shows signs of personal correspondence typical of the mid-1970s. Confidence: 0.56
Coverage	style: Personal Correspondence, culture: British, period: 1970s, location: London, England Confidence: 0.89
Publisher	Unknown Confidence:
Language	English Confidence: 1.00

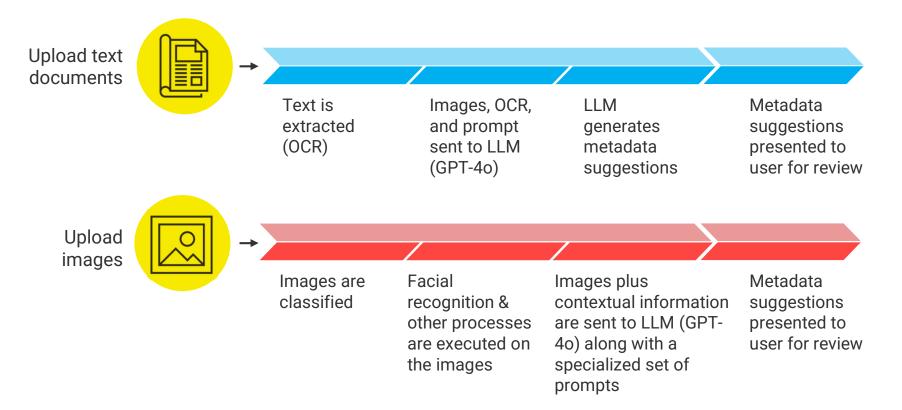


Creator	Unknown Confidence: 1.00
Title	Taiwan Blue Magpie in Grass Confidence: 0.68
Date	Unknown Confidence: 0.76
Туре	Photograph Confidence: 0.89
Format	medium: Digital Image, technique: Photography, material: N/A, measurements: N/A
Description	The image shows a Taiwan Blue Magpie, a striking bird with a long tail, vibrant blue plumage, and a black head. It has a red beak and legs, and is standing on a grassy field. The bird's tail feathers are long and elegantly curved. Confidence: 0.62
Coverage	style: Naturalistic, culture: Taiwanese, period: Contemporary, location: Taiwan Confidence: 0.97
Subject	Taiwan Blue Magpie, Bird, Nature, Wildlife, Grassland Confidence: 0.85



Creator	G. W. Rains & Co. Confidence: 1.00
Title	Invoice from G. W. Rains & Co. for Burial Services Confidence: 0.91
Date	<b>04-04-1881</b> Confidence: 1.00
Туре	Invoice Confidence: 0.97
Description	This document is an invoice from G. W. Rains & Co., a company dealing in metal and wood burial cases and caskets, located on Washington Avenue, Marshall, Texas. The invoice is addressed to Mrs. J. N. Coleman and dated April 4, 1881. It lists services provided on October 16, 1880, including a coffin, hearse, and grave digging, with a total amount due of \$50.00. The invoice is printed by Jennings Bros. Printers, Marshall, Texas, and includes handwritten entries detailing the services and costs. Confidence: 0.81
Coverage	style: Business Document, culture: American, period: Late 19th Century, location: Marshall, Texas, USA Confidence: 0.90
Language	English Confidence: 1.00

### How does it work?



### Time saving

### ~1 hour of work

Currently an archivist or librarian takes ~10 min per doc to create metadata



Now takes ~20 secs 99.4% faster

With our current tool (which is getting faster!)

### Potential to fundamentally change collections processing

### 250 hours of work

Currently an archivist or librarian takes ~10 min per doc create metadata

### 1500 docs on hard drive O IIII O IIII O IIII

Now takes ~3 hrs

### **98.8% faster**

With our current tool (which is getting faster!)

"We are very excited about the direction of (this project). This tool provides titles, descriptions, and keywords—things we used to create ourselves. So, this is a great start."

- Special Collections Librarian

