Notes and Chat History, Dealing With the Past

Notes

Scenario:

Your non-tribal collecting institution has a historic collection of indigenous music recordings. The analog tapes are degrading and there is an opportunity to undertake a mass digitization project for preservation and to provide online access.

Legally, the recordings belong to your institution. However, you know that they were created in the context of colonial extraction and appropriation, and that laws do not provide the means to recognize the indigenous group’s rights in relation to the recordings. The recordings may also have cultural, religious, and political meanings that your institution is not aware of.

What ethical questions need to be addressed in relation to this digitization project?

- Copyright and intellectual property rights, privacy issues
- Input from stakeholders
- Sensitive specimen data

What strategies can be employed to proceed with this project in an ethical way?

- if possible, consult with members of the indigenous tribe
- what is the structure of the current tribal authority
- deaccessioned some Native American materials and gave them to an institution that was a better fit for the items

Chat History

Yvonne Ng: What ethical questions need to be addressed in relation to this digitization project?

What strategies can be employed to proceed with this project in an ethical way?

Naomi Steinberger: copyright
Rhodes College: appropriate and accurate representation of content
Robin Grunwald: Input from stakeholders
Melissa Anderson: sensitive specimen data
Joan Naturale: YOU NEED AN ADVISORY GROUP OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY AND GET THEIR INPUT
Dee Gallo: They should be preserved but I think it might be necessary to forego online access
Katharine Rapkin: privacy issues regarding ceremony and sacred materials
Wofford College: if possible, consult with members of the indigenous group.
MonaLisa Whitaker: seek guidance from tribal leaders to become more informed about the collection.
Allison Young: It would certainly be polite to contact the indigenous group.
Karmen Beecroft, Ohio University: If the tribal group is still extant, what is the structure of the current tribal authority?
Amanda Strobel Wise | Rock County Historical Society: Possibly partnership to explore the meaning of the recordings and returning them.
Ricki Moskowitz: Make sure to consult with repository's legal counsel before moving forward with any reformatting.
Samantha Dodd: I worked at a museum where we deaccessioned some native american materials and gave them to an institution that was a better fit for the items.
MonaLisa Whitaker: it could be an excellent opportunity to establish essential relationships with the tribal community.
Allison Young: If the recordings have a sacred aspect, it may not be appropriate for them to be openly available.
Sachiko Iwabuchi: The ownership of the members in the tribe. If one member in the tribe agrees on preservation while other member disagrees, who decides the right to preserve?
Rhodes College: you might return the materials and offer to jointly work to preserve them and provide agreed upon access.