

**Title of Session:** Hurricane Digital Memory Bank

**Moderator:** Sheila Brennan

**Title of File:** 20060323hdmb

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Room: After School Online

**SheilaBr:** Hello everyone!

**BjB:** let's start with introductions, please

**BjB:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania. I invited Sheila to present the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, which is a project of the George Mason University, I believe.

**BjB** hopes Sheila will correct me if I'm wrong!

**SheilaBr:** I am Sheila Brennan, Project Manager of the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank. I'm also a doctoral candidate at George Mason

**SheilaBr:** Yes, that is correct, sorry just getting used to this interface

**EmilyW:** I am Emily, a helpdesk volunteer at Tapped In

**BjB:** Sue?

**SusanR:** I am an Occasional Teacher from Ontario, Canada

**BjB:** thanks, everyone! Sheila, did you have an agenda you would like to follow?

**BjB** . o O ( or did you just want to describe the project and then ask for questions? )

**SheilaBr:** No, not really. I thought I could explain briefly what the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank (HDMB) is and then I will answer questions.

**BjB** nods

**SheilaBr:** Great

**SheilaBr:** Hurricane Digital Memory Bank (HDMB) uses electronic media to collect the stories and digital record of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. We went live approximately 2 months after Katrina hit and began collecting stories and digital photos soon after.

**SheilaBr:** The project was created by the Center for History and New Media (<http://chnm.gmu.edu>) at George Mason University and the University of New Orleans ([www.uno.edu](http://www.uno.edu)) with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

**SheilaBr:** Currently we are partnered with various organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, Louisiana State Museum, various Gulf area universities and cultural institutions.

**SheilaBr:** So far we have collected over 2,000 stories, photos, and other objects

**BjB:** wow!

**SheilaBr:** Yes, it's great. 900 of them are photos from the National Museum of American History (Smithsonian)

**BjB:** what kind of photos, Sheila?

**BjB:** . o O ( I'm assuming before hurricane photos? )

**SheilaBr:** Well a curator and photographer went to the Gulf Coast after Katrina to collect and document.

**BjB:** ahhh...great!

**SheilaBr:** They collected some physical objects for their collection, then also photographed areas in LA and MS

**SheilaBr:** Since they are not doing an exhibit on the hurricanes, they offered to share all of their photos with us so that the public can see them

**BjB:** do you have a url that we can take a look at or isn't it up yet?

**SheilaBr:** sure, hold on one minute and I'll get the direct link to the SI photos

**SheilaBr:** [http://www.hurricanearchive.org/browse\\_collections.php?collectionID=745](http://www.hurricanearchive.org/browse_collections.php?collectionID=745)

**SheilaBr:** unfortunately, we are waiting some more funding before we can thumbnail them--but you can browse them from that link.

**BjB:** nods and looks

**SheilaBr:** do you want to look at them now, or should I continue about what the site does?

**BjB:** please continue. The urls will be in our transcripts

**BjB** . o O ( sorry to interrupt )

**SheilaBr**: ok

**SheilaBr**: no need for apologies

**SheilaBr**: On the homepage we offer tabs that give visitors choice of browsing by images, stories, other files (such as audio), collections, links (to outside material, mostly PBS's NewsHour with Jim Lehrer), and through our map browser. Visitors can browse by a specific location and create a customized map. Only 50 objects appear on the map at a given time so that it will actually load on your computer. But if you refresh your screen, you will see a new batch of objects and locations. We also offer a search by keyword function.

**SheilaBr**: the homepage link is: [www.hurricanearchive.org](http://www.hurricanearchive.org)

**SheilaBr**: The map is a neat function for us to incorporate into the site.

**BjB**: cool about the rotating objects

**SheilaBr**: yes, if we loaded all of the stories and photos onto the map at one time, everyone would wait for 20 mins before anything appeared.

**BjB** understands

**SheilaBr**: The other main function is to collect contributions from visitors to the site

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**SheilaBr**: oops

**BjB** smiles. No problem

**SheilaBr**: HDMB asks contributors to write first-hand accounts or anecdotes; to upload on-scene images, podcasts, or other born-digital files; or to copy blog postings or emails into text boxes.

**SheilaBr**: We also ask users to provide the geographic coordinates of either their location before the hurricanes hit or the location that best represents the content of their submission by entering a zip code or finding an exact street address on our Google map interface.

**BjB**: oh, cool!

**SheilaBr**: <http://www.hurricanearchive.org/contribute.php> This is the "contribute" page

**SheilaBr:** We tried to make the interface user-friendly, and provide a text alternative for those with older computers or low-grade browsers.

**SheilaBr:** Students from the Univ of New Orleans helped test our site, both as browsers and contributors, so that we could work out some of the design kinks.

**BjB** chuckles...nice collaboration

**BjB** . o O ( although you'll always have someone who has a problem with something! )

**SheilaBr:** Yes, well UNO is a big supporter and co-creator of the site.

**SheilaBr:** That is true BJ, and I'm sure we will have to deal with that too.

**BjB** nods...so they have a vested interest in its success.

**SheilaBr:** Indeed, and they are invested in the area community

**SheilaBr:** So this is important to them on different levels.

**EmilyW:** I have to go now, bye , thanks for coming

**BjB** waves bye to Emily

**SheilaBr:** Bye Emily

**BjB:** thanks for your help

**EmilyW** left the room (signed off).

**BjB:** Sheila, how are you advertising the site?

**SheilaBr:** We have tried different methods

**BjB** . o O ( I forget how I first learned about it )

**SheilaBr:** We have talked about it on online discussion lists, and listservs

**SheilaBr:** we also sent out press releases, but it wasn't really picked up nationally--yet

**BjB:** is this project what your PhD is based on?

**SheilaBr:** During Mardi Gras in New Orleans and in Southeast Texas (where I am living now) we distributed plastic cups with the URL and small flyers

**SheilaBr:** Not really, but it does relate.

**BjB** nods

**SheilaBr:** My dissertation will be on historical collecting, like of stamps, buttons, autographs, et al. 1870s-1930s

**SheilaBr:** I'm definitely interested in how people save the past

**BjB** . o O ( I'm old...lots of past saved )

**SheilaBr** ) I worked at the Center for History and New Media, at George Mason prior to the hurricanes, then since I moved down here temporarily, was a good person to manage the hurricane archive.

**BjB:** do you find that people are as connected to their past as they used to be?

**SheilaBr:** I would say yes.

**SheilaBr:** There is a good study of how people relate to the past, called The Presence of the Past by Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen

**SheilaBr:** They surveyed 3000 people across the country and asked them all kinds of questions related to how they interact with the past, from museum visitation to saving photos, talking with relatives, et al.

**BjB:** interesting. I find that there is a disconnect between parents and grandparents and grandchildren....there are few families living in multigenerational homes

**BjB** . o O ( those guys obviously know more than I do! )

**SheilaBr:** True, but people still are connected with their families through taking photos and saving them and looking through them.

**BjB:** that's good to hear

**SheilaBr:** Around here in the Port Arthur, TX area it seems as if families don't stray far from each other even when they are living in separate homes.

**SheilaBr:** How were the other expo sessions earlier this week?

**BjB:** I found them fascinating! I really enjoyed the information that the person from the national weather service presented

**SheilaBr:** Great

**BjB:** the participation has been fair, but we'll see how much the archived transcripts are accessed

**SheilaBr:** Should I share some ideas for teachers in using the HDMB?

**BjB . o O** ( it's so difficult to get a good time for everyone )

**BjB:** yes, please do! That would be terrific!

**SheilaBr:** Sure, I understand

**JeffC** joined the room.

**SheilaBr:** Well first, is the obvious one: writing a short hurricane story.

**BjB:** welcome, Jeff.

**SheilaBr:** Hello Jeff

**JeffC** waves

**BjB** nods about the short story.

**SheilaBr:** The stories can be submitted individually by the students, or the teacher may collect them and submit them to HDMB in a group, and we will make a collection out of them

**BjB . o O** ( Jeff, HDMB is Hurricane Digital Memory Bank )

**SheilaBr:** Teachers can send us a disk with the stories and we would upload them together.

**SheilaBr:** Oh sorry about the acronym Jeff, it's easier than typing the whole name out

**SheilaBr:** the contact for HDMB is [info@hurricanearchive.org](mailto:info@hurricanearchive.org) or [sbrennan@gmu.edu](mailto:sbrennan@gmu.edu)

**SheilaBr:** Another idea for older students is for them to create a newspaper or other type of publication using stories and images as first-hand accounts from the archive.

**BjB . o O** ( primary sources )

**SheilaBr:** Yes, primary sources.

**SheilaBr:** High school could then compare some of the stories and/or photos in HDMB with some outside media coverage

**SheilaBr:** And use the map function to focus in on specific communities or areas,

**BJB:** lots of geography connections too

**SheilaBr:** Yes, definitely

**SheilaBr:** We can't offer complete coverage, but we do have enough geographic diversity for there to be some work with river flow, proximity to ocean

**SheilaBr:** and even evacuation stories too

**BJB:** speaking of which....

**BJB:** I came across a video of artwork done by 2-4th graders

**SheilaBr:** interesting

**BJB:** that would be perfect for your collection

**SheilaBr:** great, do you know much about it?

**SheilaBr:** who created it?

**BJB:** I posted it in the hurricane central group room...can we go there and I'll show you where it is?

**BJB:** an art teacher created it

**SheilaBr:** sure, let's try

**BJB:** when you see me leave, click on the ONLINE tab to the left of this chat window, click one time on BJB and then click on the door

**BJB** left the room.

Room: Hurricane Central Group

**BJB** joined the room.

**SheilaBr** joined the room.

**BJB:** good, Sheila!

**SheilaBr:** Phew, I made it.

**BjB:** scroll down on the screen above this chat window to LINKS under featured items

**BjB:** and click on Lesson Plan Ideas

**BjB:** then click on the Art Lessons Folder

**BjB:** the first link, Art as Healing, is the one I was talking about

**SheilaBr:** ok

**SheilaBr:** Thanks, I will contact them

**BjB:** great!

**BjB:** You also might want to join this group

**SheilaBr:** We recently partnered with the Katrina Kids Project, which helped kids heal through drawing at the Reliant Center/Astrodome in Houston

**JeffC:** Joining means you may post to Discussion, which acts as a mini-listserv.

**SheilaBr:** right, thanks

**BjB:** I'm pretty sure I have a link here somewhere to the HDMB

**SheilaBr:** Yes, it was on the homepage of the HurricaneCentral, I thought

**BjB:** by golly, you're right!

**BjB:** cool

**SheilaBr:** hooray!

**BjB** groans...I told you I'm old

**SheilaBr:** nah, not at all

**BjB:** Jeff, can you help Sheila join this group, please?

**BjB** . o O ( there is another discussion starting at the hour )

**SheilaBr:** no problem

**BjB:** Sheila, this was wonderful!

**JeffC:** ok



**SheilaBr:** I think I can figure out how to join

**SheilaBr:** Thanks for having me!

**BjB:** thank you so much for taking the time to share your information

**JeffC:** click "room view" or the welcome link so that you're seeing the welcome screen in the top frame.

**SheilaBr:** It was my pleasure

**JeffC:** then... scroll down the top frame until you see a little "i" in a green circle next to the HurricaneCentral HelpCenter link

**JeffC:** click the link

**JeffC:** then click the link to "join this group"

**JeffC:** ok... good job!

**SheilaBr:** ok, just did that.

**JeffC:** yup... i saw

**JeffC:** feel free to post to Discussion... you have a lot to share with this group

**SheilaBr:** very good.

**SheilaBr:** Ok, thanks for helping me with that

**JeffC:** thanks Sheila

**JeffC** waves bye

**BjB** waves bye and heads for reception

**SheilaBr:** waves bye