

The devil's mouthwash: America's complicated relationship with alcohol

Jessica Maratea, MLIS '14

*Center of Alcohol Studies
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

Christine Rambo, MLIS '15

*School of Communication and Information
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

Note from the editors: The following two texts are reflections from two graduate students enrolled in the Master of Library and Information Science program at the Rutgers School of Communication and Information. Jessica and Christine, along with three other group members, created a poster for Judit Ward's Digital Library Technologies course based on material found at the Center of Alcohol Studies Library. They were encouraged by Dr. Ward to present their work with a poster and a lightning talk at this year's SALIS conference. Their narratives are less direct explanations of their poster's content, but more focused on the process of their poster's creation and the experience of presenting it.

On Friday, May 2, I presented a poster at the 2014 SALIS Conference to represent my group's Digital Library Technology project, The Devil's Mouthwash: America's Complicated Relationship with Alcohol. I presented with another group member to demonstrate the purpose and highlights of our digital library. The materials included photographs, advertisements, political cartoons and propaganda, public service announcements and the covers of pamphlets all covering the theme of alcohol. The bulk of the materials came from time periods such as the Temperance Movement, and the Prohibition era. In addition, our digital library included a few items from each decade

proceeding those eras in order to follow the evolution of our country's ever-changing relationship with alcohol. Our poster and digital library maintained an unbiased perspective, and showcased both pro and anti-alcohol materials. The project was both fun and challenging to put together. The greatest satisfaction came from witnessing how the public and private agencies viewed alcohol over the decades.

I had presented at literary conventions and conferences in the past, but this was the first time I had presented a poster in narration of work and research I had done as a graduate student. Each person who attended and presented at the conference

held an important and engaging role, and I felt welcomed and honored to have been invited by our professor, Judit Ward, to help present on behalf of our group and class.

Librarians from all over the country and the world presented at the conference, and it was very interesting to see the commonalities among this narrow focus of librarianship. It opened my eyes to a different world of libraries. As a graduate student, I gained a lot from this experience. It was nerve-wracking at first to present in front what I consider

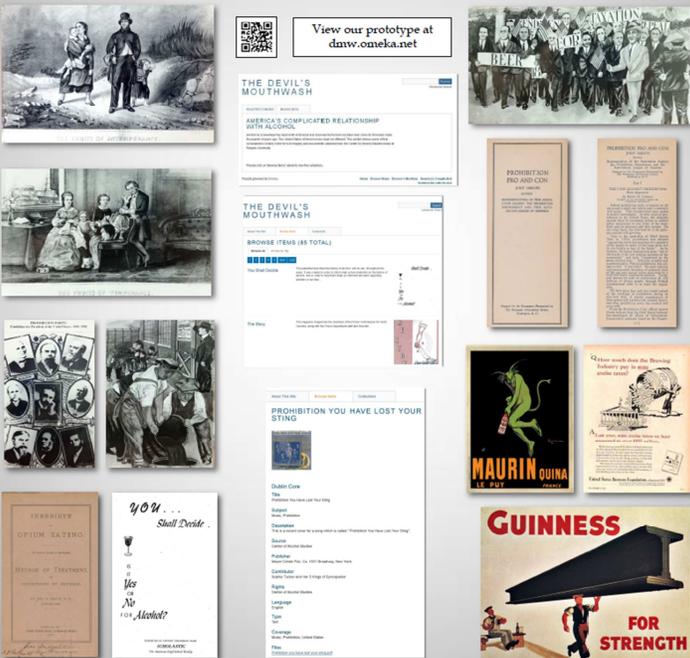
experts on the field, but I was pleased that our presentation seemed to have been well-received by the warm and accepting community. As an online student, the ability to engage in academic activities in person is rare. I've learned how important it is through this experience to challenge myself and take advantage of opportunities such as these and for this I am grateful.

---Jessica Maratea



The Devil's Mouthwash: America's Complicated Relationship with Alcohol

Christine Rambo, Jessica Maratea, William Vanti, Kaitlan Estes, Julia Jackson
Rutgers University, 17:610:558 Digital Library Technology, Spring 2014

| Project Goals | Presenting a Digital Library Prototype | Organization |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To exemplify the purpose of a digital library ❖ To learn how to use a digital content management system ❖ To learn how to identify suitable items for the collection ❖ To offer insight about the role alcohol has played in our society since the 1800s |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ We assigned the materials gathered into one of five collections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Absolut Ads ❖ Temperance Movement ❖ Prohibition ❖ Miscellaneous Alcohol Ads ❖ Printed Material |
| <h4>Project Challenges</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Selecting a viable topic with accessible materials. ❖ Providing complete and accurate metadata for the images we chose. ❖ Considering the copyright and Digital Rights Management issues. ❖ Deciding on an appropriate platform to meet the library's needs. ❖ Coordinating and dividing responsibilities between members from remote locations. | | <h4>Source Materials</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Center of Alcohol Studies Library ❖ www.VintageAdBrowser.com ❖ Political cartoons ❖ Printed pamphlets ❖ Photographs ❖ Temperance movement propaganda ❖ Modern advertising examples ❖ Historical documents |

My decision to attend the 2014 SALIS conference and present a poster was a significant one. It was the first academic conference that I have attended, and I was not certain what to expect. I am an MLIS student at Rutgers University and have just completed my second year out of a three year program. One of my classes this past semester was Digital Library Technologies taught by Professor Judit Ward. It was this

class that led to my attendance at the SALIS conference. The term project for the class involved working with a group of other students to create a prototype of a digital library. Professor Ward instructed us to choose any topic relating to substance abuse, and told us early in the semester that we would have the opportunity to present our projects at the conference if we chose to do so. My group decided to focus our prototype

on advertising and propaganda both for and against alcohol use in the history of America. We titled it *The Devil's Mouthwash: America's complicated relationship with alcohol*. You can still view it at dmw.omeka.net. Our assignment already included creating a poster, so the decision to participate in the conference only meant a slightly earlier due date than the rest of the class. I was joined at the conference by one other group member and we were somewhat nervous as we entered the conference room. But we were quickly welcomed and found a corner to listen to the other presentations. Before I knew it, it was time to present our poster. Our five minute description of the project went smoothly and the next half hour or so was a

wonderful experience as other conference goers came over to take a closer look and ask questions about the poster and the library prototype we created. It was a valuable opportunity to meet and engage and exchange ideas with librarians from around the world. The day began with a great deal of nervousness over the quality of our project and anxiousness over the reception we would receive. But that turned out to be needless worry, and I am grateful that I had this opportunity. I would certainly do it again, and I hope that future students will jump at the chance.

---Christine Rambo