

# Tagging for Justice: Democratizing Knowledge through Participatory Object Description

**Dr. Pamela Lach (she/her/hers)**

Digital Humanities Librarian

San Diego State University

[plach@sdsu.edu](mailto:plach@sdsu.edu) @VisualizingPam

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Library & Information

 DIGITAL  
HUMANITIES

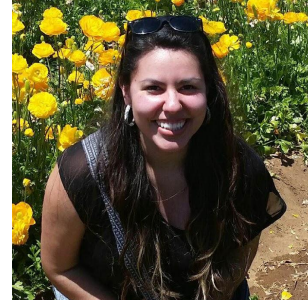
# a project that explores the possibilities and limitations of employing crowdsourced folksonomic tagging to enhance digital archival collections of social movement histories



Pamela Lach, PI



Annie Chen, Consultant



Jocelyn Melendez, RA



# knowledge organization

2 sexes (M/F)?

5 sexes?

spectrum of sex identities?

"Drag queen in gold costume at Pride Festival," 1999. Pride Photography Project, San Diego Pride Photo Collection 1994-2008, Lambda Archives of San Diego, SDSU Digital Collections





# the problem with expert-driven classification

- constraints + limitations
- biased products of historic inequality
- amplify systemic + structural racism, sexism, classism
- ≠ neutral

Ex: “illegal alien”



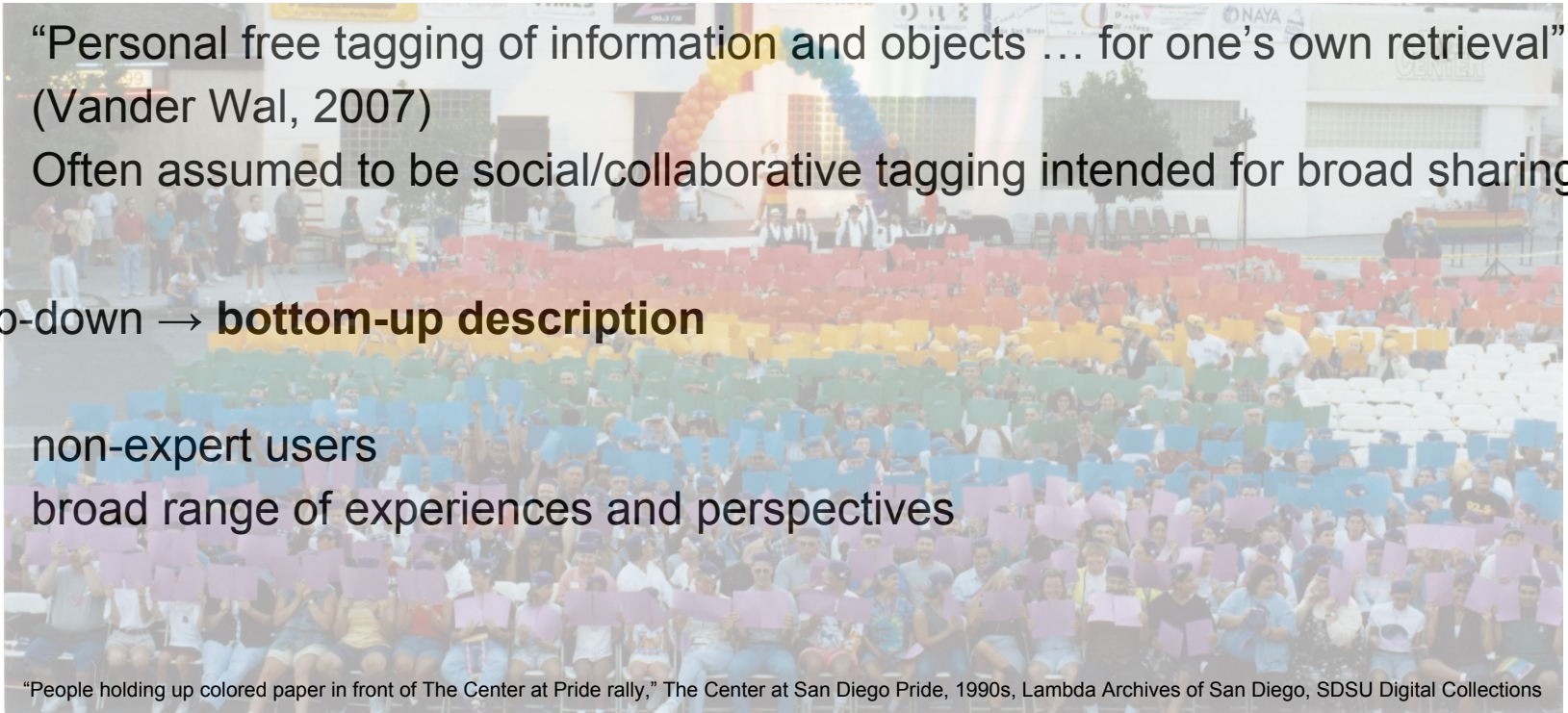
# why folksonomies?

User-generated tagging of web resources by individuals and/or groups of people

- “Personal free tagging of information and objects ... for one’s own retrieval” (Vander Wal, 2007)
- Often assumed to be social/collaborative tagging intended for broad sharing

Top-down → **bottom-up description**

- non-expert users
- broad range of experiences and perspectives



“People holding up colored paper in front of The Center at Pride rally,” The Center at San Diego Pride, 1990s, Lambda Archives of San Diego, SDSU Digital Collections

# possibilities

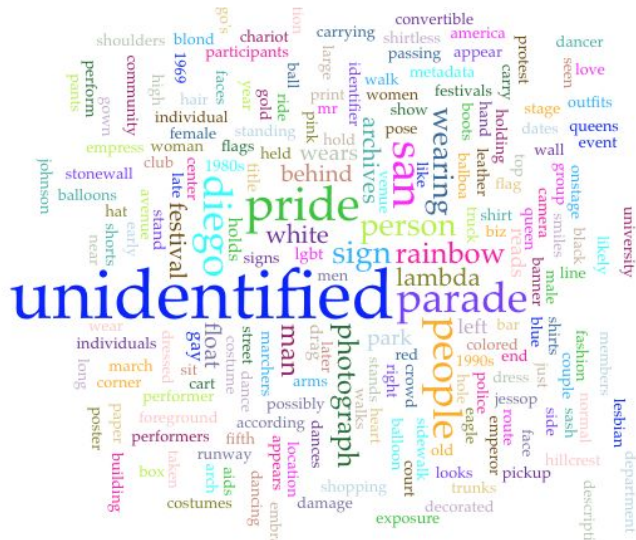
- Diffuse and more democratic
- More organic, flexible, adaptable, customizable (Kim et al., 2008)
- GLAMs process collections and create more access points (Van Hooland, 2011)
- Tap into individuals' embodied knowledge and decenter expertise





## limitations (IR)

- Noisy, ambiguous
- No uniform way to share, exchange, and reuse (Kim et al, 2008)
- No ontological structure and semantic relationships (Guy & Tonkin, 2008)
- Limits of crowd's wisdom (Lorenz, 2011)



# Tagging for Justice

- To what extent does user tagging **democratize knowledge** organization? Reflect individual biases? Challenge or reify expert/hegemonic frameworks and perspectives?
- Can we produce metadata that are **sensitive** to issues related to sexuality and gender identity/gender expression, and thereby capture elements of the digital archive that are not yet categorized or described?
- Can crowdsourcing enable **new stories** to emerge in between the gaps of the digital objects and their metadata?
- How can folksonomies be used as an extension of **social justice** work? (Holterhoff, 2017)



# the collection

Lambda Archives of San Diego (<https://lambdaarchives.org/>)

- Photos and ephemera related to annual Pride activities, Gay Liberation Front protests (1970s)
- SDSU hosts the digital
- Limited/missing metadata



IDENTIFIER: P505.096M

TITLE: Drag queen and a marcher in San Diego  
Pride parade, 1994

DATE: July 1994

CREATOR: Frank, Denise

DESCRIPTION: A drag queen dressed as a iconic French maid appears to be kissing a man in street clothes in the middle of the road as the parade marchers (one with a shopping cart) go by behind them, with onlookers on the sidewalk. The man holds a pink slip of paper in his left hand as if the kiss were a reward.

KEYWORDS: Drag queens; Gay pride; Pride  
parades; San Diego LGBT Pride; Parades; Kisses





IDENTIFIER: P505.059M

TITLE: Two shirtless men at San Diego Pride, 1995

DATE: July 1995

CREATOR: Frank, Denise

DESCRIPTION: An unidentified shirtless man holds the waist of a shirtless man wearing a fruit hat at San Diego Pride in 1995.

KEYWORDS: Gay pride; Pride festivals; San Diego LGBT Pride



# challenges with describing this collection

- What are appropriate words to use when our language about sexual orientation and gender identity/expression keeps shifting?
  - Some words may be acceptable in some contexts and within some communities, but not others.
- How to describe events in the past when our contemporary language for describing these things may be very different (e.g. homosexual vs gay)?
- How to ascribe a static term to a static image from the past that may reflect a fluid identity that has changed over time?

# the tool

Zooniverse: <https://www.zooniverse.org/>

- Projects = subject sets (images) + workflows (sequence of tasks)
- Supports multiple tasks
- Multiple data exports



PROJECTS ABOUT GET INVOLVED TALK BUILD A PROJECT NEWS

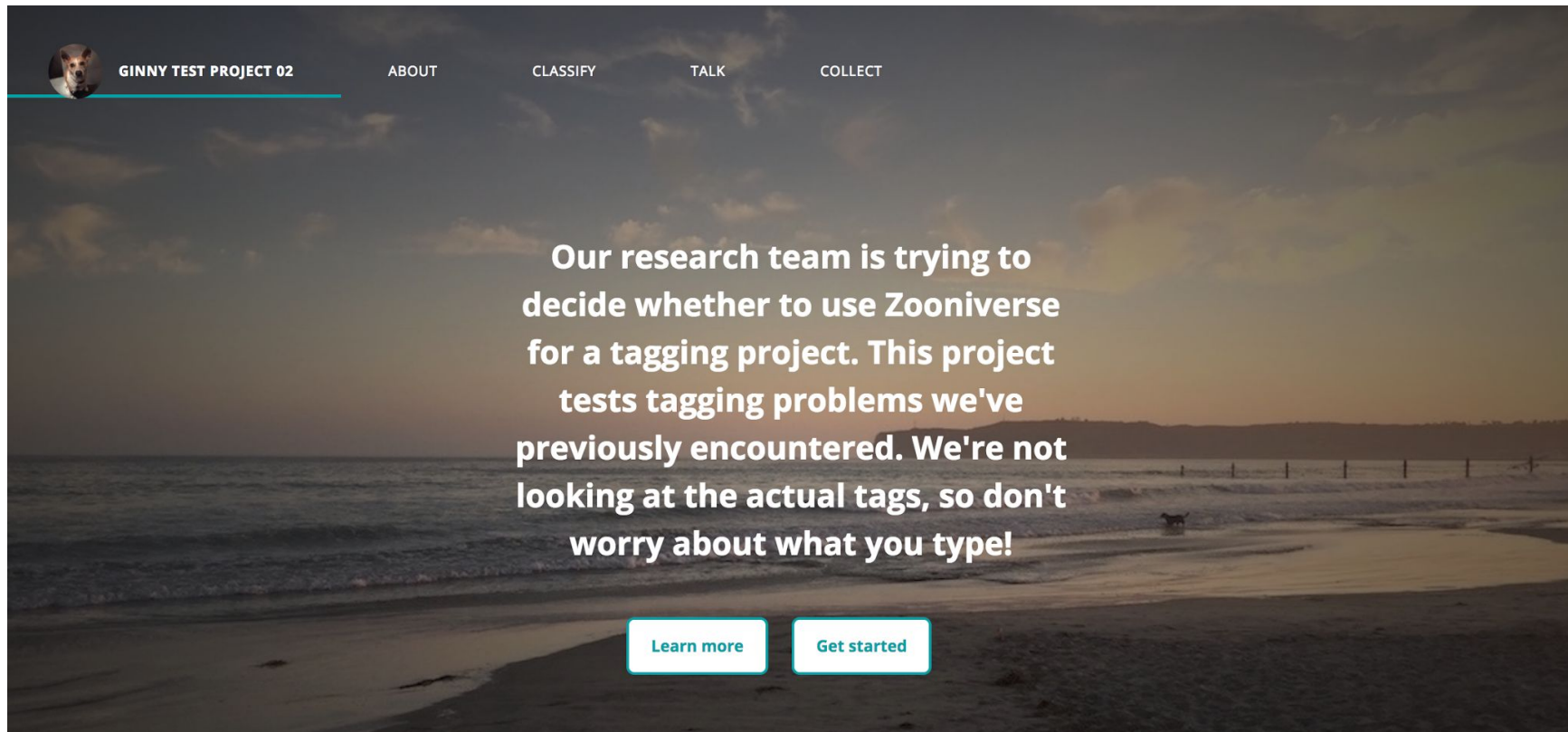
SIGN IN REGISTER

WELCOME TO THE ZOONIVERSE

# People-powered research

See All Projects

# preliminary tests featuring my dog Ginny







What best describes what you see in the picture? What stands out to you? What does this make you think of? Describe this image by entering a tag or multiple tags. Tags can be a word or a phrase. You can create multiple sets of tags by separating them with a comma or semicolon. If you want to skip this image, click Done to move to the next picture.

Need some help with this task?

Done





GINNY TEST PROJECT 02

ABOUT

CLASSIFY

TALK

COLLECT



What best describes what you see in the picture? What stands out to you? What does this make you think of? Describe this image by entering a tag or multiple tags. Tags can be a word or a phrase. You can create multiple sets of tags by separating them with a comma or semicolon. If you want to skip this image, click Done to move to the next picture.

Ginny and Fred; octopus; BFFs

Need some help with this task?

Done





**Your classification:**

What best describes what you see in the picture? What stands out to you? What does this make you think of? Describe this image by entering a tag or multiple tags. Tags can be a word or a phrase. You can create multiple sets of tags by separating them with a comma or semicolon. If you want to skip this image, click Done to move to the next picture.

**"Ginny and Fred; octopus; BFFs"**

Talk

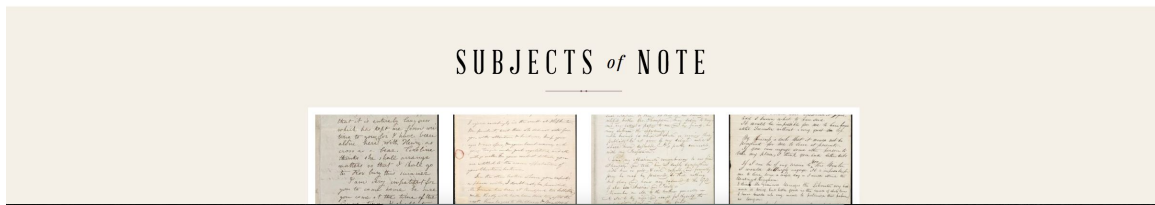
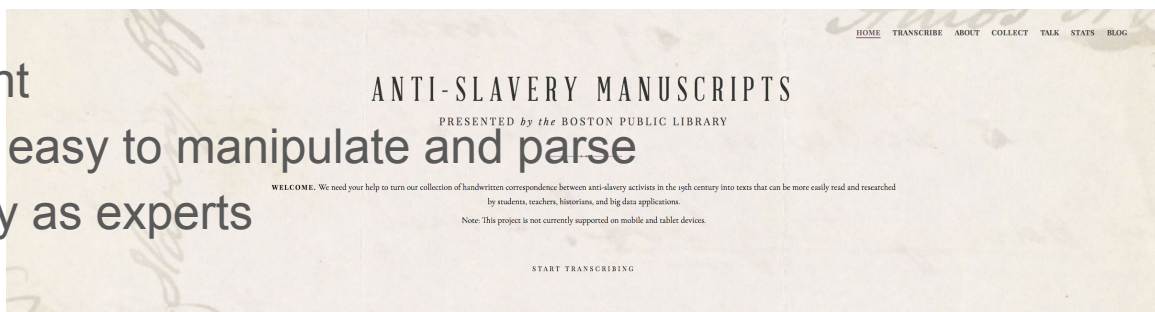
Next





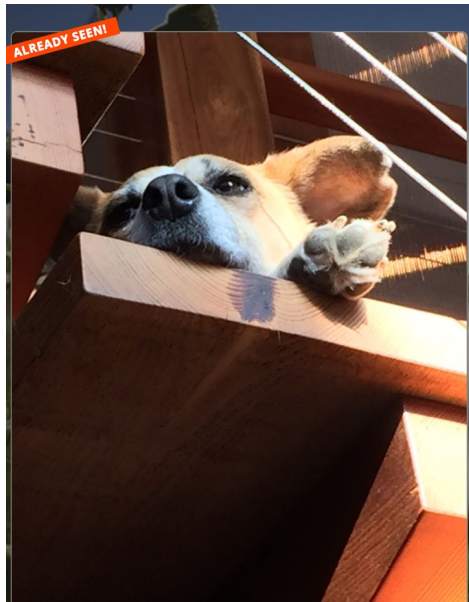
# Zooniverse benefits

- Easy to create projects; easy to structure the data
- A single workflow can be associated with multiple subject sets (collections)
- Device agnostic
- Easy and intuitive for users
- Flags “already seen” content
- Data export file is relatively easy to manipulate and parse
- Participants can self-identify as experts



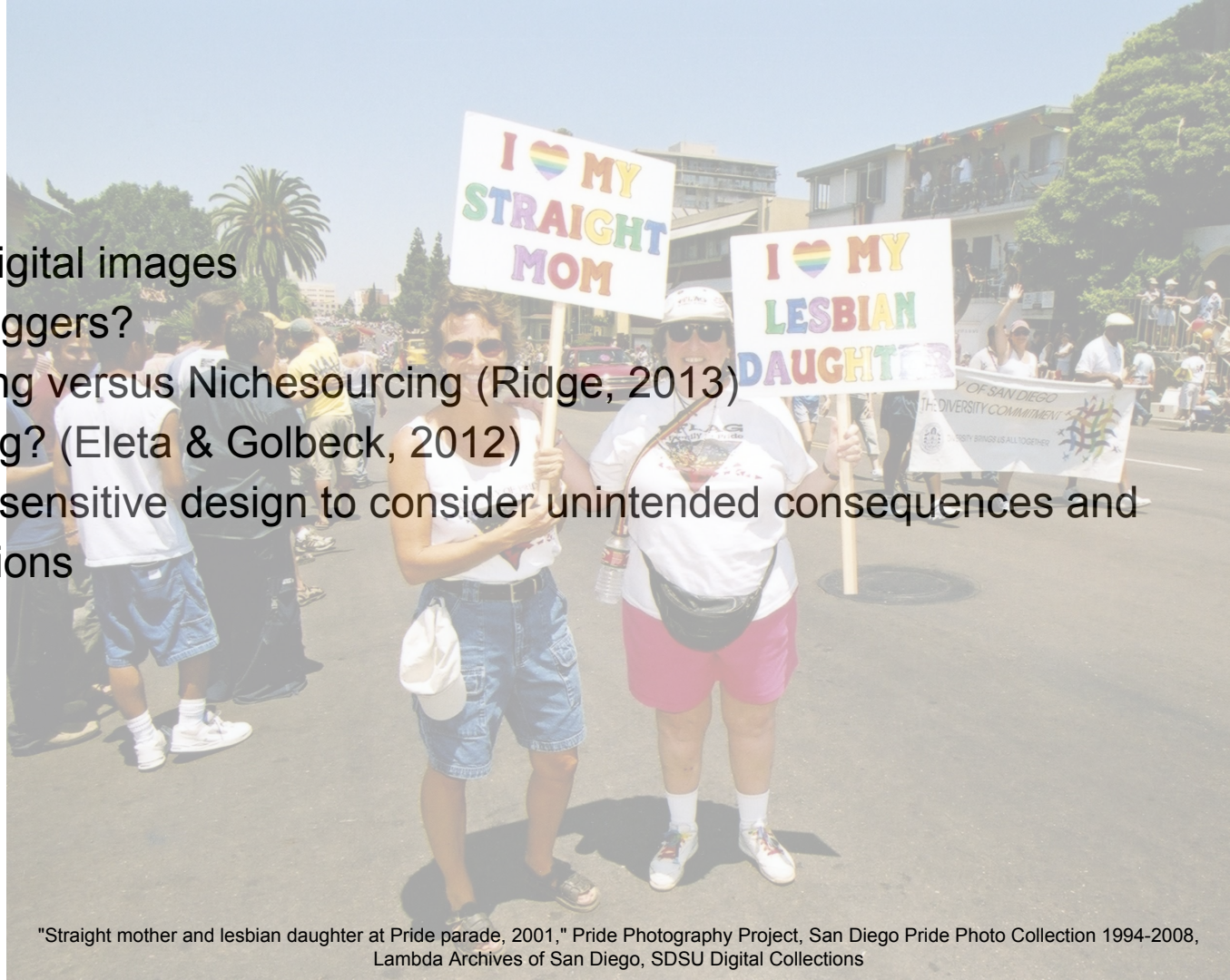
# technical challenges

- Inability to edit responses
- Repeat image bug when not signed in
- Users strongly encouraged to create accounts/participate while logged in → possible deterrent?



# the design

- Select subset of digital images
- Communities of taggers?
- Communitysourcing versus Nichesourcing (Ridge, 2013)
- Multilingual tagging? (Eleta & Golbeck, 2012)
- Incorporate value sensitive design to consider unintended consequences and long-term implications



"Straight mother and lesbian daughter at Pride parade, 2001," Pride Photography Project, San Diego Pride Photo Collection 1994-2008, Lambda Archives of San Diego, SDSU Digital Collections



## next steps

- Complete the design
- Develop recruitment strategies and participation incentives
- Conduct the study
- Analyze the tags
- Potential workshop on crowdsourced tagging
- Incorporate the tags and/or option to tag into SDSU's LMS?





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<https://tinyurl.com/tagging4justice-hdma>

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