



From disaster to preservation and dissemination

Reggie Raju (PhD)
Director: Research and Learning Services
UCT Libraries





Climate change and wildfires on the Table Mountain

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- Climate change contributed to numerous mountain wildfires
- Continuous increase in temperature contributed to Cape Town's worst drought on record (2015-2018)
- Situation became so dire that Cape Town faced becoming the first major city in the world to run out of drinkable water
- On 18 April mountain wildfires spread to the University resulting in the burning of the Jagger Library





Libraries and destruction through fires

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- Destruction of libraries through fire is not new in South Africa
- Protest action targeted bastions of the apartheid system
- Political or socio-economic aligned destruction of libraries must be distinguished from natural disasters
- Destruction of the Jagger Library was the first natural
- *“An African continent, which has suffered several series of conquests, has been struggling to reconstruct its own history and particularly that which is documented... any special collection that is frail, no longer available, or no longer printed very often tends to be p... of its heritage value and in terms of the knowledge proj*





Building back better

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- Destruction of the Jagger Library presented UCT Libraries with the **opportunity** to recover and rebuild for the better
- Collection development - expand access to special collections to promote the sharing of unique African heritage
- Digitized unique collections will improve visibility and accessibility
- Presents opportunity to future-proof unique collections
- There is a vicious cycle as small print runs pushes-up the costs of printing. The inability of the community to purchase the book limits the opportunities to bring down printing costs





Future-proofing or long-term preservation

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- Future-proofing and the open sharing of unique collections become paramount
- Need to capture, digitize and share the oral heritage
- Open access movement has carved a path to openly share this unique heritage
- Need to improve access to South African and African intellectual heritage through a long-term sustainable model
- Large scale digitization projects will contribute to long term preservation of this unique intellectual heritage
- Need for partnership among South African institutions





Summation

- Libraries and archives collect and make available that which has long-term value
- Disaster has brought to the fore the vulnerability of analogue collections given the continuous threat of climate change
- BBB strategy aims to convert heritage information and preserve that for posterity
- Exploiting the openness processes this heritage material can become more visibility and accessible
- UCT disaster highlights that climate change contributes to loss of critical information resources that carries the heritage of a society
- Remedies proposed by libraries responds to securing the heritage of society





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Thank You

reggie.raju@uct.ac.za



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