

Throughout the summer, Hahn Smith representatives conducted workshops and interviews with faculty, staff, alumni and donors discussing the rebranding process. The input from deans and students will be sought in September, culminating with a consultation with Board of Governors later that month.

In addition, September will also feature an online survey to faculty, staff, students and alumni as well as face-to-face 'streeters' with random individuals around the main campus.

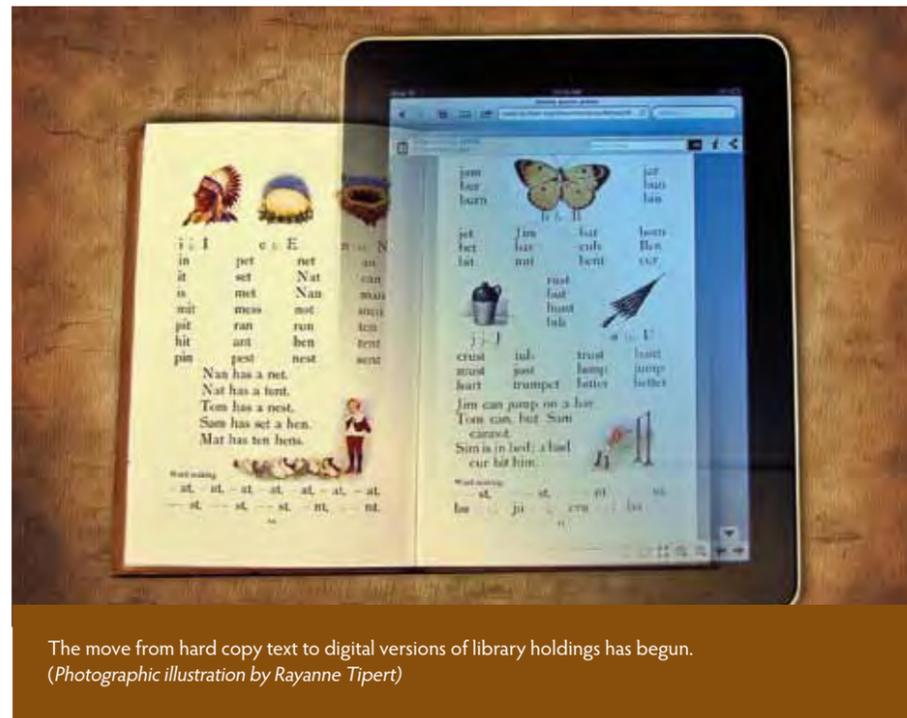
A website will launch in mid-September for members of the Western community to stay informed. Social media also will be utilized to provide another opportunity to share ideas.

To connect with the process, visit www.uwo.ca

DIGITIZING LIBRARY HOLDINGS

In Spring 2011, Amazon announced that sales of e-books through its Kindle service had surpassed sales of print books on Amazon.com. While e-books may seem like a recent technological development (the Kindle was introduced November 2007) they have actually been available for many years in the academic environment. Early English Books Online (EEBO), which provides the full-text of over 100,000 titles published in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and British North America from 1475-1700, was introduced at Western Libraries in 2001. Through EEBO Western scholars can study the earliest editions of works shaping the beginnings of modern science and philosophy, as well as classic literary, religious and political texts using their desktop, laptop or portable mobile device.

Acquiring and making available e-books is one example of how academic library collections are changing in the digital age. The future of academic library collections also includes the digitization of local holdings to enable broader access and use of unique research materials. Through the last several years Western Libraries has been steadily building experience with digitization through a number of projects, such as a collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies to establish



The move from hard copy text to digital versions of library holdings has begun. (Photographic illustration by Rayanne Tipert)

an electronic thesis and dissertation program for Western (<http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/>) and a partnership with Internet Archive and the Ontario Council of University Libraries to digitize 1,400 textbooks from the Ontario Textbook Collection, featuring textbooks used in Ontario classrooms between 1846-1970. The electronic versions of these textbooks, part of the James Alexander and Ellen Rea Benson Special Collections, are available through the Shared Library Catalogue (www.lib.uwo.ca) and Internet Archive website (www.archive.org) for free download in a variety of e-formats.

There is no shortage of possibilities for future digitization projects at Western Libraries which holds many unique treasures. The C.B. 'Bud' Johnston Library (Business) has begun to digitize their historical Canadian Annual Report Collection using a grant from the technology company EMC. It is anticipated that the grant will cover part of the costs associated with digitization, which is an expensive undertaking. In addition to converting materials (while ensuring the integrity of the original item) the resulting digital files require descriptive text, often called meta-data, to enable their discovery and use and a storage/retrieval solution. The work is labour intensive and

specialized and the hardware/software needed to create a digital archive costly, given the pace at which technology advances. The costs of digitization increase when a collection poses unique challenges, either because of its nature (eg, images rather than text) or its size. Perhaps the best example is The London Free Press Photo Negative Collection, which numbers in excess of 1.6 million images. While not all of these images can or will be digitized, preserving even a fraction of the Collection is a major undertaking.

And yet without investment in digitization projects, Western is at risk of losing and/or severely compromising access to unique treasures. The Vintage Football Film Digitization Project is an example of a collection that has been saved through digitization. In addition, there are countless other materials belonging to Western Libraries that have the potential to contribute to preserving the institutional memory of our university and research being undertaken locally and globally.

To learn more visit: www.westernmakesadifference.ca/priorities/libraries.html. Your gift will help Western educate the next generation of global leaders.



(Photo by Barry Druxman)

COULD ALAN THICKE BE THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE TV DAD?

BY JASON WINDERS

Alan Thicke, BA'67, had no idea what he was doing.

Having skipped Grades 4 and 6, he arrived at The University of Western Ontario at age 16. Fresh from his small-town life, the 1965 Elliot Lake Secondary School homecoming king admits to boxing up dirty clothes and mailing them home for his mom to wash and return to his dorm. "I had no skills," he laughs.

Today, the veteran television star reflects fondly on those initial awkward days.

"My time at Western, in retrospect, was a great time, and instrumental in everything I have managed to do in my life," says Thicke, a Delta Upsilon fraternity member. "But by today's standards, I would consider it to be simple, protected, naive, simple old Canadian values."

Thicke's inherent personable nature can belie a remarkable career.

"I got lucky in ways that were purely Canadian," says the man who hosted Wayne Gretzky's wedding in 1988.

After Western, he joined the CBC working for Lorne Michaels, who later created *Saturday Night Live*. "They paid so badly in Canada at the CBC that it turned out to be a great advantage," he says. "You had to do a bunch of things to make a living."

In the 1970s, Thicke was part of the leading edge of Canadian entertainers into The States. "Now the place is lousy with Canadians; they are everywhere. It used to be a very small, somewhat exclusive club. Happily now, it is not so much," he says.

He spent his first decade in show business as a writer for icons: Richard Pryor and Flip Wilson, Anne Murray and Glen Campbell. He penned infectious TV theme songs to shows like *Diff'rent Strokes*, *The Facts of Life* and *Wheel of Fortune*. He has hosted numerous radio and television programs, none to more success than CTV's *The Alan Thicke Show* (1980-83) and none to more failure than *Thicke of the Night* (1983-84).

Thicke contends the latter show, which aired against late-night goliath *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, didn't translate from its afternoon format in Canada into evening in The States. It died in less than one season.

Months afterward, however, he would be tapped to play Jason Seaver on *Growing Pains*. That role put him along side Bill Cosby (*The Cosby Show*) and Michael Gross (*Family Ties*) as the iconic television father figures of the 1980s. He is identified by that role, and its 'wholesome dad' persona, to this day.

"It sort of saved my life," Thicke says of the Seaver role. "I was on a dramatically, universally hated talk show when I first went public in The States. I was so happy to recover from that career suicide with a sitcom. I will always be happy for that."

Today, he can pick and choose his work. He makes recurring appearances on CBS' *How I Met Your Mother*, and is currently working on film and Internet projects with comedians Adam Sandler and Will Ferrell. And he continues to write and emcee across North America.

Thicke also remains connected to Ontario and Western. His stepfather, Dr. Brian Thicke, MD'56, still practices medicine in Brampton. In 2000, Thicke established the William Jeffery Scholarship in the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry in honour of his birth father, William Jeffery.

"My Canadianess has always been somewhat unique and special," he says. "I like that. And Western is part of that."

Visit alumnigazette.ca for Alan Thicke's advice he plans to offer his 13-year-old son when he eventually heads to university.