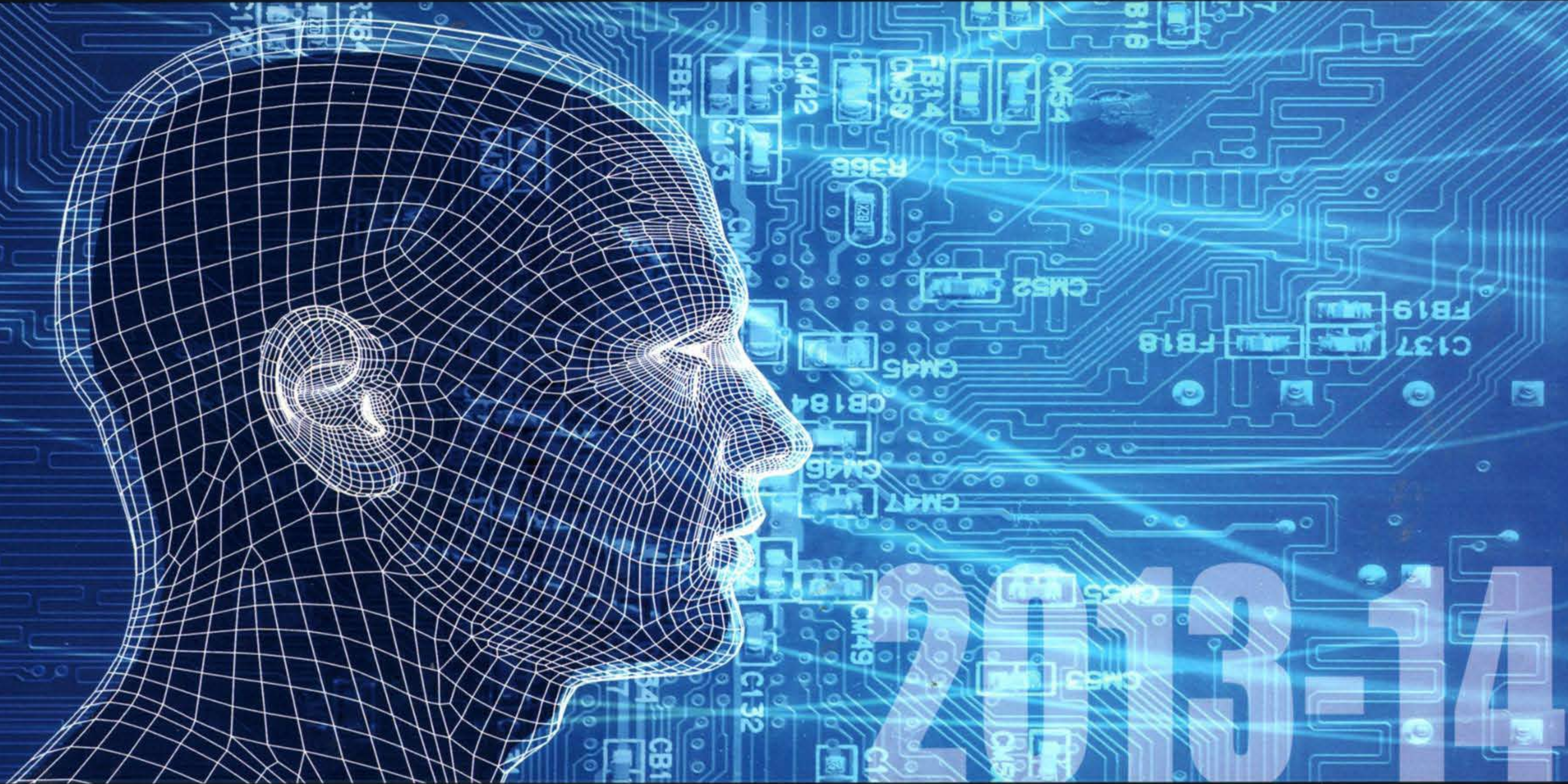


F L O R I D A A T L A N T I C U N I V E R S I T Y



D I V I S I O N O F R E S E A R C H A N N U A L R E P O R T



On the Record: A Project to Save a Rare Collection



Maxine Schackman, Director of the Recorded Sound Archives at Florida Atlantic University's Wimberly Library, and sound technician Ben Roth, prepare a stack of records that the RSA rescued for cleaning following Hurricane Sandy.

As Hurricane Sandy ravaged homes and businesses along the northeast coast of the U.S., its high winds and torrential rain damaged thousands of one-of-a-kind personal collections that may be lost forever.

But one set of treasures still has a fighting chance. Peter Muldavin, the world's leading expert on American vintage children's records, found 786 duplicates of his more than 17,000 kiddie records in a flooded Long Island storage facility following

the October 2012 superstorm. Rather than give up, he contacted the Recorded Sound Archives (RSA) in FAU's Wimberly Library in an attempt to salvage the records, which were produced between 1920 and 1958.

Muldavin, known as the "Kiddie Rekord King," donated the water-damaged records to the RSA, which collects, organizes and protects access to digitized copies of vintage audio recordings. An effort has been undertaken at the RSA to digitize

the sound on the records and restore the jacket images.

MAKING LEMONADE

"Mr. Muldavin understood our unique qualifications in this area and presented us with both a challenge and an opportunity," said Maxine Schackman, the RSA's Director. "We are excited to be working with such rare and wonderful artifacts from the 20th century. I can't wait to see the reaction when we are able to share our work online."

The covers of many of the records featured beautiful artwork, story books and paper doll cut-outs that had to be discarded because of mildew and mold. However, the images on them are being preserved digitally and restored to their original condition through the use of Adobe Photoshop. Some of the records are warped and many are encrusted with mud, requiring hand washing. To help with the restoration, the RSA purchased a vinyl record flattener, a device that slowly heats a warped record between heavy metal plates.

This is the most extensive restoration ever attempted by the RSA, which has been restoring phonograph recordings for more than a decade. Many of the digital images and music files from well-loved kiddie records of years gone by will be available through RSA's password-protected Research Station.

"It's serendipity," Muldavin said of his connection with the RSA. "The damaged records had no value in the marketplace of collectors, and I thought they had no value to anyone. FAU is turning lemons into lemonade."