A man in a plaid shirt is kneeling in a control room, surrounded by vintage electronic equipment and control panels. The room is filled with various dials, switches, and control units. The man is looking at a panel on the right side of the frame. The overall atmosphere is technical and historical.

If it's been broken, why should **we** fix it?

Technical Debt,
Stakeholder Engagement,
and Emotional Labor

JULIA CORRIN, SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS, WASHINGTON, DC 2018

A Little Background:

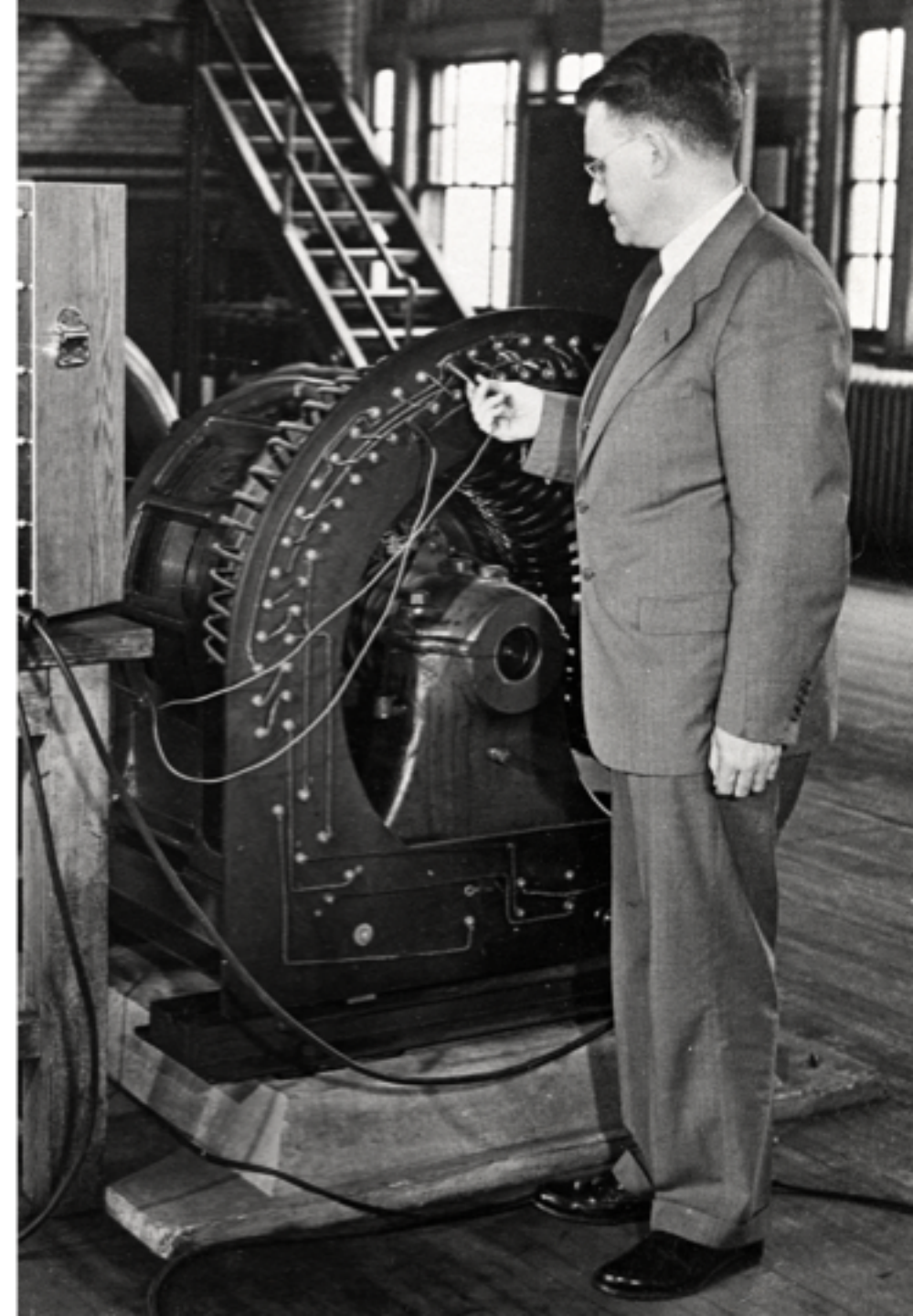
25 Years of Digital Projects

Heinz Electronic Library Interactive Online System

- Launched in 1997
- 800,000 digital images

State of the Art

- 400 DPI, black and white, TIFFs
- No accepted metadata standards
- Everything “custom”



Flash Forward:

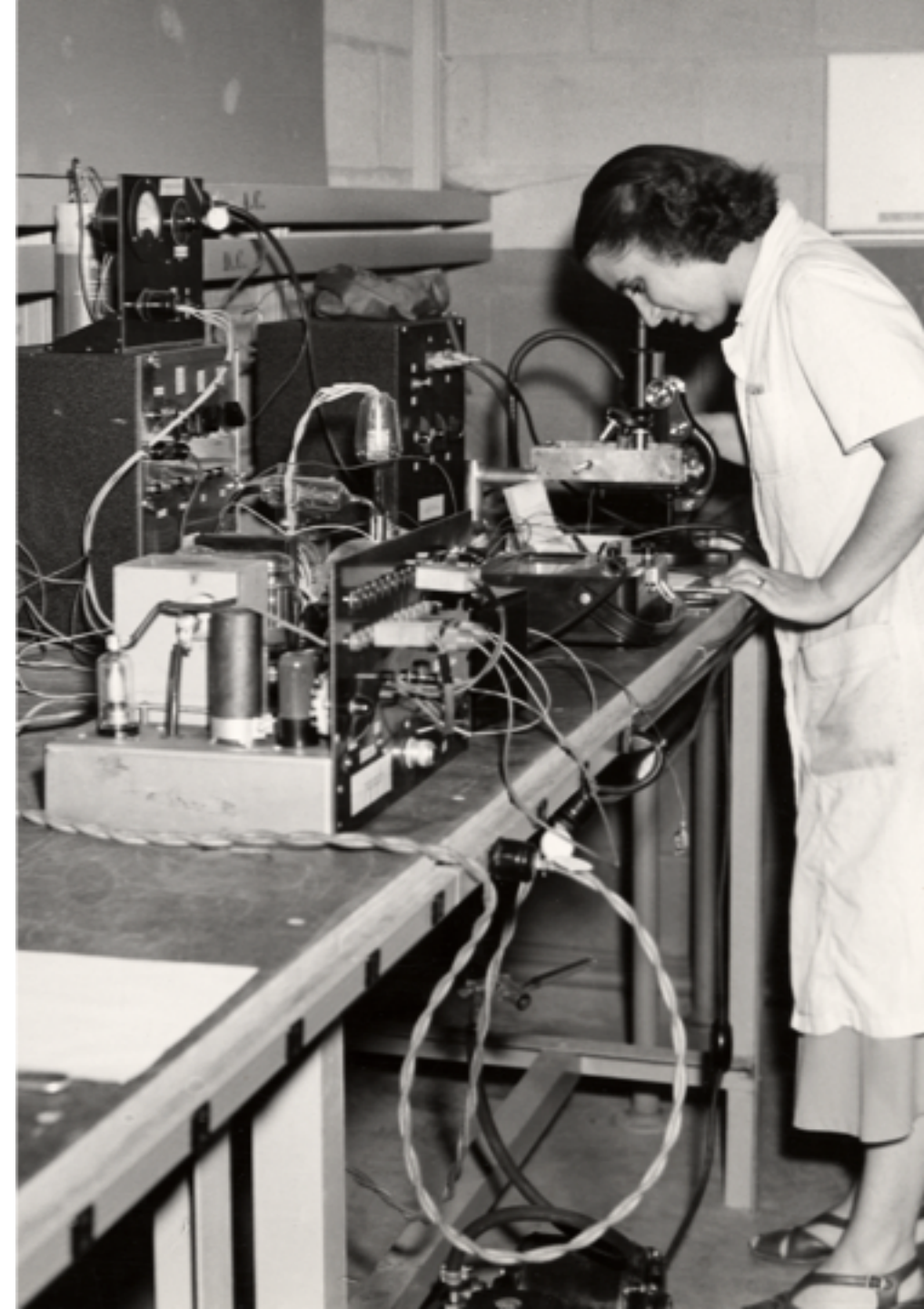
The Song Remains the Same

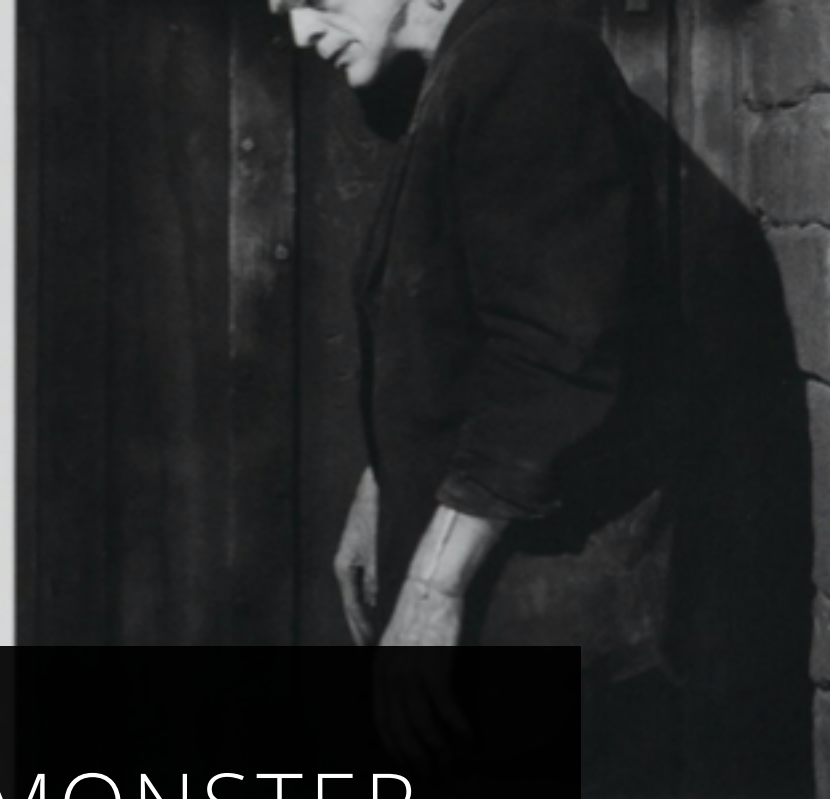
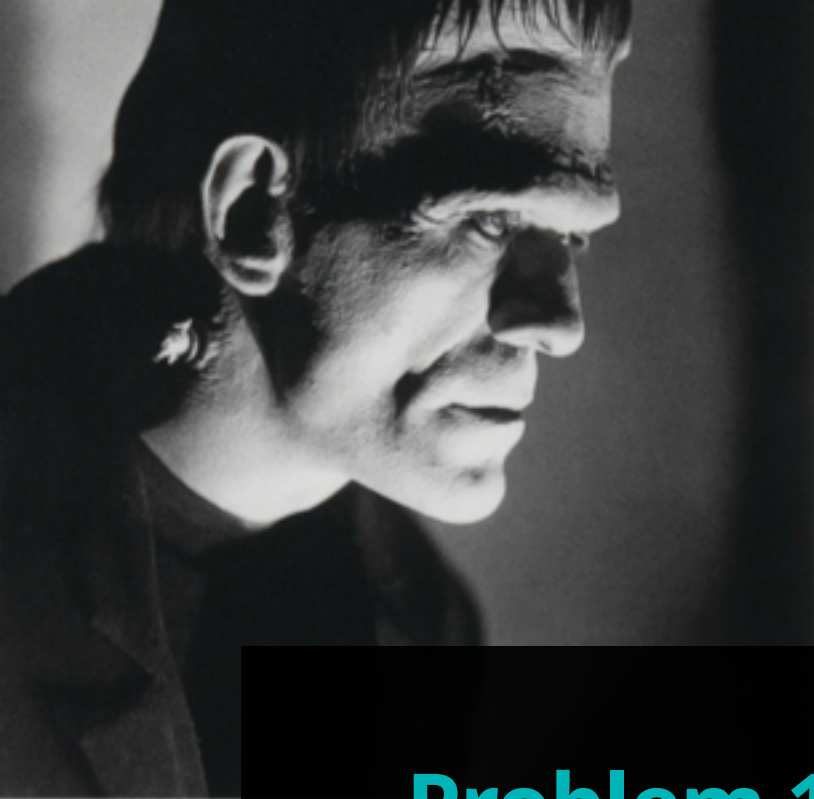
But we liked the old system...

- 400,000 objects
- 24 collections

"State of the Art"

- 600 DPI, black and white, TIFF
- Still no accepted metadata standards
 - EAD "like", Dublin Core "like"
- Finding aid browse structure, item level description





Problem 1 WE'VE CREATED A MONSTER



Problem 2 A WEED IS STILL A WEED





Solution IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

A photograph of a large, modern university building with a grid-like facade of windows, partially obscured by a teal overlay. The building is a multi-story structure with a flat roof and a series of vertical window panes. Bare trees are visible in the foreground and background.

Carnegie Mellon University