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

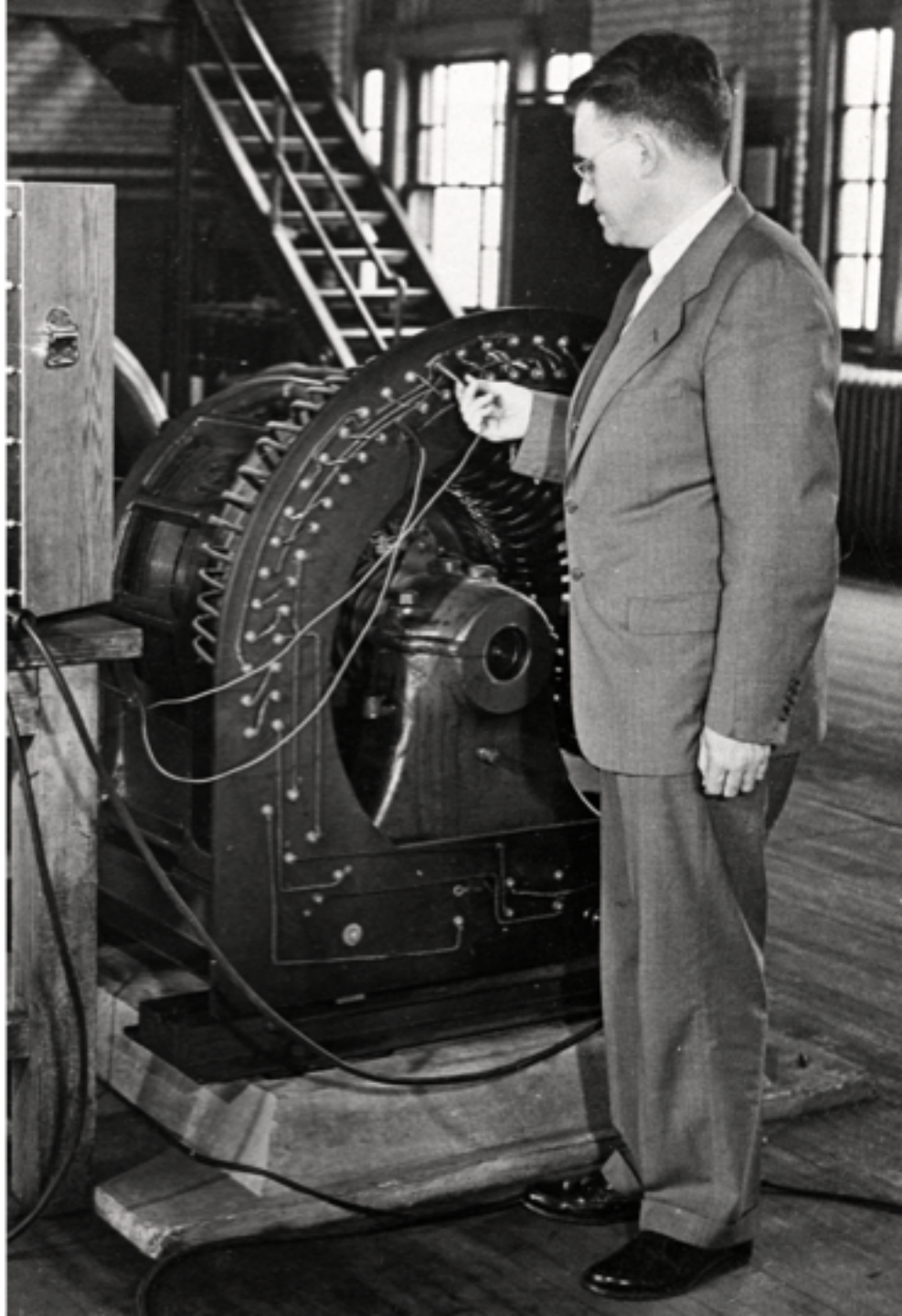
A Little Background:
25 Years of Digital Projects

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”



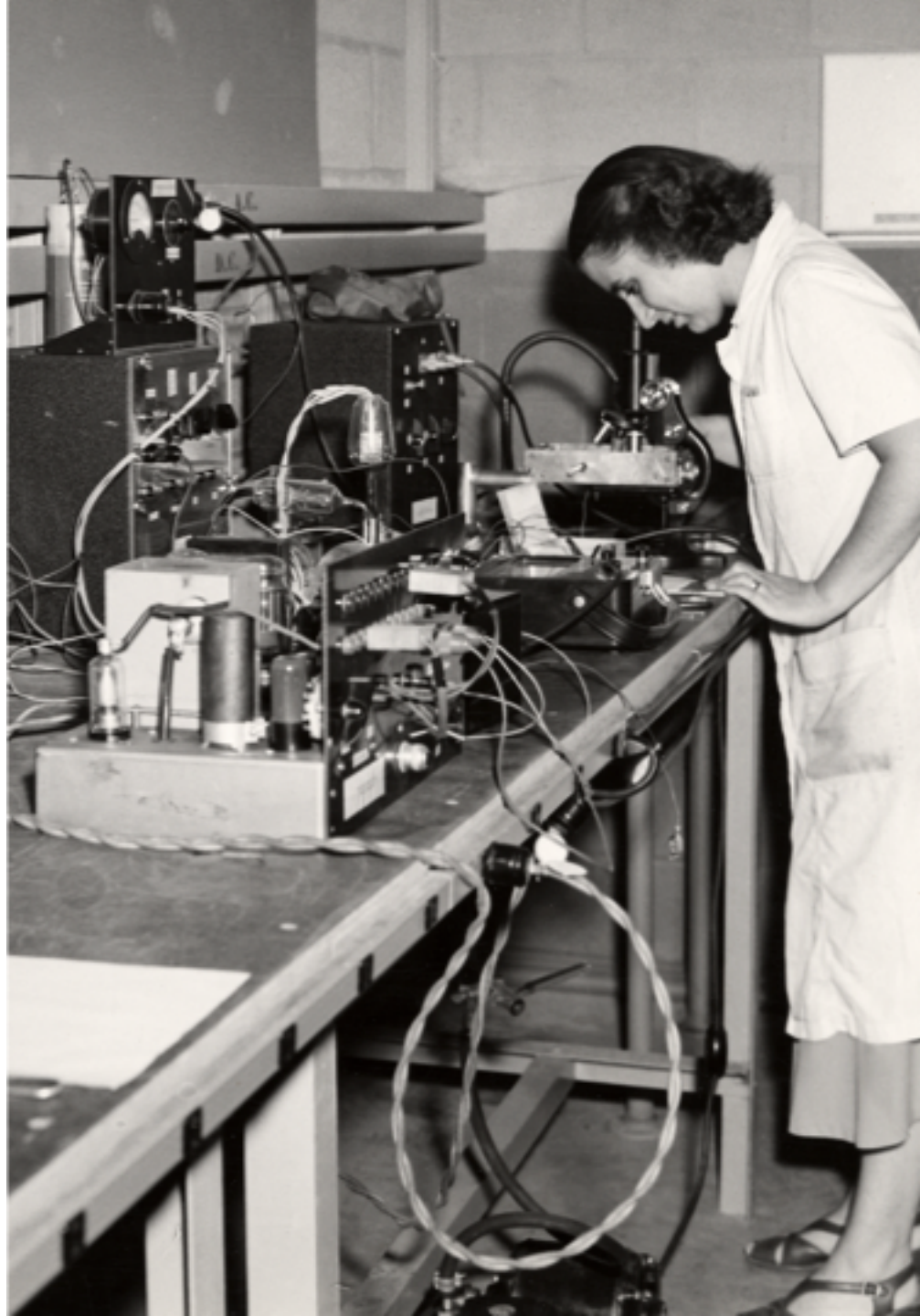
Flash Forward:
The Song Remains the Same

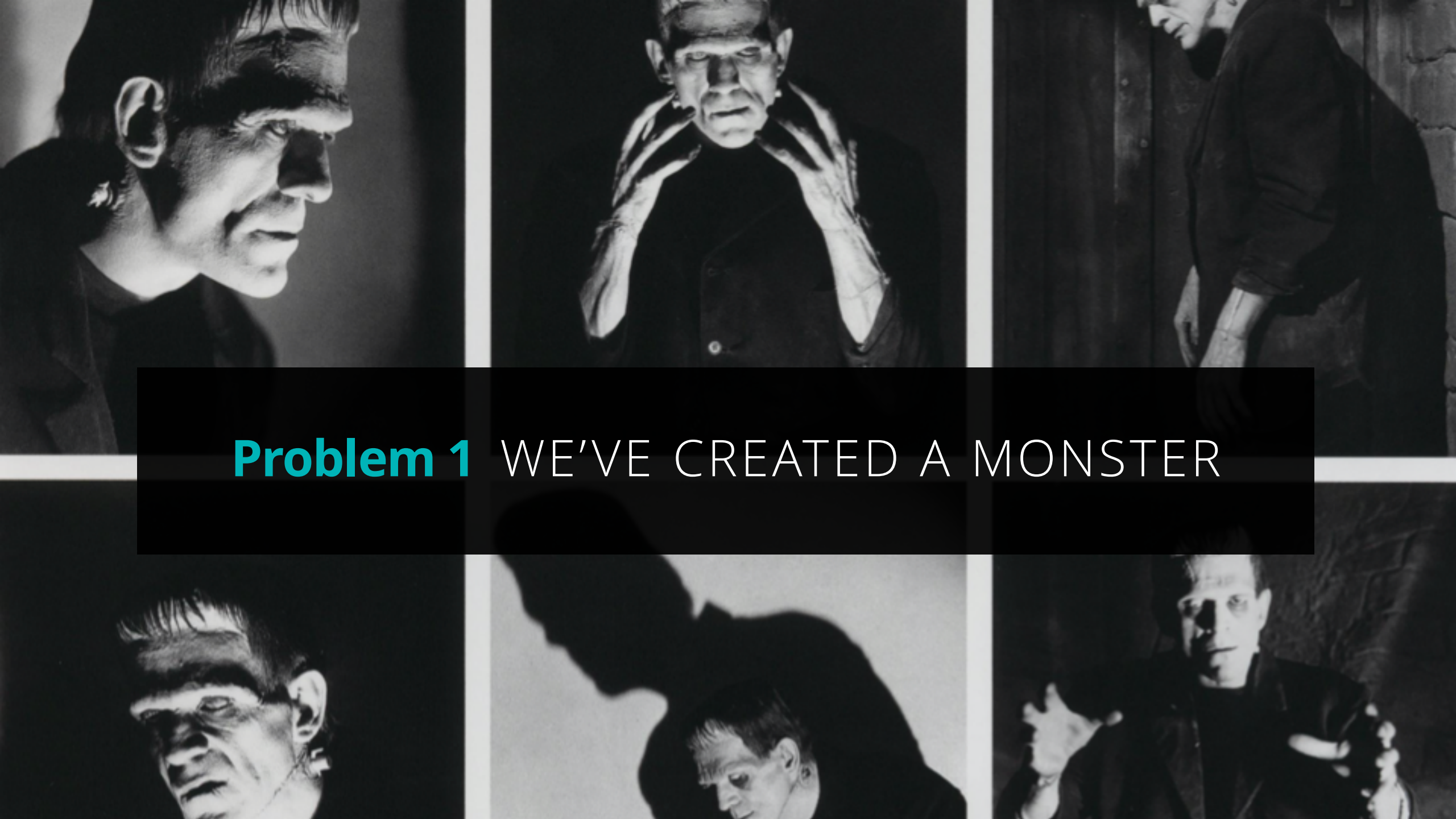
But we liked the old system…

- 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

Carnegie
Mellon
University