

# Dean's Innovation Grants

## Final Report

Date: September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023

Project Title: Creating greater accessibility to special collections materials for patrons with vision disabilities

Project Team Members: Meagan May

### Project Purpose

This project aimed to create greater accessibility to archival and rare materials in UNT Special Collections for patrons with reduced or low vision disabilities through the purchase of Freedom Scientific's TOPAZ XL HD desktop video magnifier and the creation of an accessibility station for the Judge Sarah T. Hughes Reading Room. This desktop magnifier, along with its accompanying GEM software, will allow patrons to magnify, adjust, enhance, capture, and save documents, photographs, artifacts, manuscripts, and other materials to meet a variety of vision accessibility needs.

### Project Activities

Project activities included working with TACO on the purchase, delivery, and installation of the TOPAZ equipment and GEM software, and creating a station for the desktop magnifier alongside the public computer in the Reading Room.

Plans to promote the TOPAZ through promotional materials from External Relations were delayed, and unable to be completed prior to the end of the grant cycle.

### Budget

<b><i>Project Budget</i></b>	<b><i>TOTAL FUNDS EXPENDED</i></b>
Equipment - \$4400	\$4143
Printing, Copying - \$150	\$0
<b><i>Total - \$4550</i></b>	<b><i>\$4143</i></b>

\* For student assistant (graduate).

\*\*Funds may not be used for professional memberships or journal subscriptions.

\*\*\* Travel funds may be used for site visits for research purposes or may be used for presenting a paper on this research project at a conference.

### Project Outputs/Outcomes

Through the grant cycle the TOPAZ desktop video magnifier was successfully ordered, delivered, and installed. Self-training on the desktop video magnifier was completed by the Primary Investigator. The accompanying GEM software that allows users to capture enlarged or contrasted images and texts was installed at the public computer in the reading room along with additional library-provided accessibility software to create an accessibility station within the reading room.

### Other Results (if applicable)

It has been discovered that the TOPAZ desktop video magnifier is also an excellent tool for sharing miniature books with small groups or identifying text within miniatures for research or cataloging purposes.

### Anecdotal Information

Although we have not yet had the chance to promote the TOPAZ throughout the library or UNT community, those who have visited the reading room have been excited and/or intrigued by it. The son of a Special Collections donor was particularly excited to hear we had the equipment, and noted he was inspired to find a similar piece of equipment for his parents for home use.

### Best Practices

While obtaining a TOPAZ Desktop Video Magnifier is not a novel idea (in fact, one is currently on the first floor of Willis) it did solve a problem of accessibility for special collections users where materials are not easily transportable or allowed to leave the supervised environment of the reading room. In this manner, I believe it is a best practice to consider bringing accessibility tools to special collections users in their research space when funding allows.

### Program Continuity

Plans are still in place to create promotional materials related to the TOPAZ over the course of the 23-24 year. Once promotional materials are distributed, staff within the reading room will begin tracking statistics related to the TOPAZ's use.

The Primary Investigator will also conduct cross-training on use of the TOPAZ to Special Collections staff over the course of the 23-24 year.