Hi everyone! I’m pleased to be joining you today from Egypt to talk about Patron Driven Captures: The January 25th Revolution Archive at the American University in Cairo.
As I am unable to be with you in Annapolis today, I’d like to introduce myself. My name is Carolyn Runyon, and I’m the Digital Collections Archivist at the American University in Cairo. I manage our Archive-It subscription, in addition to our digital library, institutional repository, and wiki.
I’d also like to take this opportunity to thank the Internet Archive, who have allowed me to participate in today’s conference from Cairo. Additionally, I’ll mention that all of the images used in this presentation were collected as part of the University on the Square project (which I’ll be describing shortly) and are available in our Rare Books and Special Collections Digital Library.

We’re going to start today’s conversation with a pre-recorded presentation to be followed by a question and answer session via Skype.
I’m going to begin by giving you a little background information on the Egyptian Revolution and the University on the Square project, of which the January 25th Revolution Web Archive is an integral part.
This presentation on patron driven captures really began nearly 2 years ago on January 25th, 2011, when protests rang out in Egypt’s cities, demanding the resignation of former President Ḥusnī Mubārak. 18 days later, on February 11, the Egyptian people successfully toppled a dictator and began to plan for country’s first truly democratic elections since 1952. Centered in Tahrir Square, located in downtown Cairo, the non-violent demonstrations, marches, and labor strikes that sparked the revolution brought together groups of protesters from divergent ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds.
As Egyptians found solidarity in fighting a dictatorship, archivists, oral historians, faculty, students, and administrators at the American University in Cairo convened in dorms and houses to develop a plan to document the demonstrations. From the onset, University on the Square: Documenting Egypt’s 21st Century Revolution project developers recognized that active collaboration with AUC, Egyptian, and global communities would be crucial to developing a comprehensive and transparent record of the January 25th Revolution.
The University on the Square project is a participatory archives initiative that “seeks to preserve the momentous events of early 2011” and ongoing “events as they unfold”. The project embraces and Archives 2.0 approach as defined by Kate Theimer in her 2011 *American Archivist* article, “What is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?” Theimer states, “archivists must be user centered and embrace opportunities to use technology to share collections, interact with users, and improve internal efficiency.”

By embracing a collaborative, Archives 2.0 approach to collection development and management, archivists at AUC have been able to build a participatory archive of millions of Web documents, digital library assets, and scholarly communications. Further, the process of building the University on the Square collections provides archivists with a unique opportunity to educate citizens of a burgeoning democracy about the role of archives in transparent governance.
We began documenting the January 25th Revolution on February 3rd, by capturing content published on the Web, including photos, videos, media coverage, and related sites and social media. In the beginning, we focused on international and local media coverage. We recognized the importance of capturing social networking sites to document the organization of the protests and marches that incited the revolution.

But the social networking content, blogs, and little known Egyptian sites were problematic. As expats, we didn’t always know which were the best sites to document. While our Egyptian colleagues helped us out with local websites and popular Egyptian blogs, we found that we were still missing important content created by Egypt’s youthful digital activists.

We turned to crowdsourcing for a solution.
The University on the Square project solicits contributions of Web addresses for Twitter feeds, blogs, and other sites that document the uprising and resultant social and political movements. Using an online donation form, archivists crowdsource collection development responsibilities with project contributors. Archivists also use Facebook and Twitter accounts to encourage participation in building the January 25th Revolution Web Archive.

Contributors suggest sites, blogs, and tweets that represent a variety of political stances. The patron driven captures allow contributors to define the January 25th Revolution Web Archive. The result is a diverse, collaboratively-developed collection of more than 30 million unique Web documents, including videos, photographs, articles, blog posts, and tweets.
By actively participating in archival projects, contributors within and outside of AUC continue to build an archive that documents the January 25th Revolution. Donors and researchers make collection development decisions, add content, digitally curate, and interact with open access repositories. In addition to pushing archives to embrace technological innovation to improve archivist-researcher communications, Kate Theimer’s Archives 2.0 approach encourages archivists to “serve as effective advocates for their archival program and their profession.”

The University on the Square project, including the January 25th Revolution Web Archive, exemplifies the role of archivist-as-advocate. Archivist engagement with activists, faculty, students, administrators, photographers, artists, videographers, and interviewees informs contributors and researchers of the importance of archivists and archives as stewards of collective memory and transparent governance.

Thanks for listening. I’m looking forward to you questions and comments.