To fully catalog dissertations and theses with contributor metadata, you have to be able to decipher what’s on the signature page. We used to search everywhere for help, then started compiling lists of names, and eventually created a database to simplify and expedite the process.

**Identifying names**

- Create database early in the project
- Fill in data as project progresses
- Provide drop-down list for department names if they stay consistent over time
- Try to provide a complete date range for professors’ employment
- Work closely with departments who have records with name information

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**Professor What??**

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**Original Work Tools**

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**Signature Database**

- Better browsing abilities for visually matching signatures
- Entry form for new signatures or adding to the end of the list view
- Ability to filter/sort the database
- Search feature to find complete/partial names

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**Wish List**

- Image recognition that would generate close visual matches for indecipherable signatures.
- To finally interpret all the indecipherable signatures by coordinating with departments to search their records.

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**Tips**

- Create database early in the project
- Fill in data as project progresses
- Provide drop-down list for department names if they stay consistent over time
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**Results**

- Improved functionality
- Increased matching capabilities
- Less time looking for individual names
- Easy to add new names to the database
- Easy to update metadata for indecipherable names once discovered
- Database currently has over 1,500 names