Last September, a devastating fire in the National Museum of Brazil completely destroyed the only existing records of several now extinct languages. Based on this example and on the illustrations from my own research, this talk promotes the idea that documentation of understudied languages and cultures involves much more than just collecting data in the field. I will argue that a large proportion of documentation efforts should go to managing, disseminating, and preserving collected data. The research pipeline for these efforts not only produces unique digital records from unstudied cultures, but also creates new teaching tools. The talk will include a short demonstration of the student work at Wayne State Phonetics and Fieldwork laboratory. The outcomes of linguistic field research will be illustrated by discussing a previously unknown sound that we recently discovered in a Papuan language Mee.

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