

RLG Programs: Highlights for the Archival Community

The RLG Programs work agenda by theme and program is on the web at: <http://www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/agenda.htm>. A new program to “effectively disclose archives and special collections” will be added soon. This document calls out projects that may be of interest to the archival community.

Bringing Special Collections into the Large-Scale Digitization Milieu

- Shifting Gears: Gearing Up to Get Into the Flow (Oct 2007)
<http://www.oclc.org/programs/publications/reports/2007-02.pdf>
Among its eight recommendations: *Describing special collections: Take a page from archivists. Stop obsessing about items... Start at the top, at the collection level, then think how to group materials, stressing the **relationships** between the materials.*
- Impact of Digitizing Special Collections on Teaching and Scholarship (Jul 2008)
<http://www.oclc.org/programs/publications/reports/2008-04.pdf>
These reflections on the June 4, 2008 Symposium about Digitization and the Humanities include these calls for action: *Special collections librarians and archivists should find ways to work in academic departments... We can take advantage of digitized primary source materials to create new opportunities for teaching appropriate scholarly methods, even in large survey courses... We must make sure libraries and archives both measure use of special collections and work with faculty to demonstrate their value for excellent research.*

RLG Programs Descriptive Metadata Practices Survey Results (Nov 2007)

<http://www.oclc.org/programs/publications/reports/2007-03.pdf>

Of the 89 responses from 18 RLG partner institutions with “multiple metadata creation sites” that were known to already have some level of cooperation among them 37% identified themselves as archival processing centers.

- Although MARC was the most often used data structure (65%) EAD was third (43%). EAD was used by 70% of the archival processing sites.
- AACR2 (81%) was the most often used data content structure; DACS was used by 42% of the respondents.
- 36% of the archival collections build and maintain a local thesaurus. More than half of these local thesauri were for people/organization names, places, and genres of materials.
- A third of the archival collections reported that *half or more* of their collections were inadequately described—and unlikely to be described without additional resources, funding, or both.
- Only 30% of the archival collections responded that their metadata creation tools were effective.

Gather Evidence to Inform Changes Needed in Metadata Practices

<http://www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/renovating/changingmetadata/attributes.htm>

A working group is analyzing data in preparing recommendations that would affect metadata practices. For example, more than half of the mixed collection records in WorldCat use form/genre terms (vs. 4% in all of WorldCat); a working group member is determining whether there is a connection between the records with form/genre terms that patrons are retrieving and what patrons are actually requesting. Another project will be analyzing the data elements that optimize discovery of archival materials; contact Jennifer Schaffner (schaffnj@oclc.org) for details

RLG Programs Metadata Tools Forum (May 2008)

<http://www.oclc.org/programs/events/2008-05-08.htm>

This forum focused on tools that expedite metadata creation or editing that can be used by multiple institutions and do not require purchasing a new system—tools that rely on commonly available software most institutions would already have in-house or that are based on open source components. Among the summary sheets written by the tool developers:

- Archon, a Web-based tool for archivists and manuscript curators that publishes archival descriptive information and digital archival objects to a Web site.
<http://www.oclc.org/programs/events/2008-05-08a.pdf>
- Archivists' Toolkit, an open source archival data management system.
<http://www.oclc.org/programs/events/2008-05-08b.pdf>

A new working group will inventory existing EAD creation and editing tools and compare their technical requirements, features, and outputs; contact Merrilee Proffitt (proffitm@oclc.org) for details.

Prototype a Cooperative “Identities Hub”

<http://www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/renovating/leveragevocab/idresource.htm>

We're building on the work done on WorldCat Identities to bring together information about creators now hidden within library, archival, and museum contexts, using a social networking model. Objectives include making it easier for users to identify works by or about the same person or corporate body regardless of language or discipline and expose that information into the “network flow”—beyond the confines of library, archival, and museum silos. A new “Networking Names Advisory Group”, which includes representatives from the archival community, is developing use case scenarios for the prototype. These use case scenarios will help determine the functions and target audiences that would have the most impact and therefore identify the most needed components.

RLG Programs is also working with the Encoded Archival Context Working Group to assess the EAC for compatibility with other authority schemes and its potential for integrating with WorldCat Identities and the Virtual International Authority File.

<http://www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/standards/standards/EACstandard.htm>

Examples of how information can be compiled from a variety of resources to provide enriched information about a person who may be known by a variety of names in different contexts may be seen in some existing WorldCat Identities pages. Since information is datamined from WorldCat, which includes collection-level records contributed by archives, archival collections sometimes appear in the “works by” section of the page.

- WorldCat Identities page for Willie Varela
<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-no00-24973>
- WorldCat Identities page for Iris Chang
<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n95-74518>
- WorldCat Identities page for Antonio María Osio
<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n95-94919>

(Examples attached in handout; click on “more” in the works by section for the first two if viewed online to see the archival collections represented.)