

# COLLECTION MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MATERIAL EMPHASIS ON DIGITAL PROJECTS

**LAILA MILETIC-VEJZOVIC**

*University of Central Florida, Special Collections and University Archives, USA*

## **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of the article is to discuss the role and management of Special Collections in an emerging university environment. Furthermore, it is to introduce principles and practices of collection management of Special Collections material with an emphasis on digital projects goals, digitization criteria, and management of digital assets. As per the premise that good digital collections are created according to an explicit collection development policy, the article provides specific guidelines for developing a collection development policy. There are numerous benefits for scholarship and preservation resulting from creating digital collections that dramatically broaden access to unique and rare materials from Special Collections holdings. However, for the material to be discovered, metadata is essential, because there is no digitization without metadata, and good digital collections must include descriptive searchable metadata, created based on best practices and available standards. Google and search engine have revolutionized the way our patrons access information, therefore Special Collections must bring their content to the desktops and process their hidden collections.

## **KEYWORDS**

academic libraries, special collections, collection development, digitization, collection management, United States

## **Introduction**

In this paper I want to discuss the role and management of Special Collections in an emerging university environment. Furthermore, my desire is to introduce principles and practices of collection management of Special Collections material with an emphasis on digital projects goals, digitization criteria, and management of digital assets. Decisions

regarding collection development policy have implications not only for researchers, but also for digitizing projects, and collection management. The paper provides an overview of the issues, including guidelines for developing a collection development policy, as well as identifies some institutions that have set collection management priorities based on their collection development policies, and digital initiatives.

The aim of the paper is also to discuss numerous benefits for scholarship and preservation resulting from creating digital collections that dramatically broaden access to unique and rare materials from Special Collections holdings. As per the premise that there is no digitization without metadata, good digital collections must include descriptive metadata accompanying digital items. Accordingly, the paper explores numerous issues involved in such projects from the perspective of standards, best practices, creation of metadata, and workflow for departments.

### **Special collections**

Before anything else, I need to define Special Collections which is an integral part of an academic library – a heart of a research university. Therefore, let me define all of the three entities.

“A leading research university is one that obviously excels in the heavily funded research fields. But it is also a university that finds excellence in all fields of academic pursuit. A research university is one that values all forms of scholarship, but also places a premium on world-class teaching, mentoring, and the training of the next generation of scholars.”<sup>1</sup> Academic library is a lot of things but most importantly it supports research and promotes the development of new knowledge. Academic library is a set of collections and services that people value and use; set of spaces that people value and come to; a research library collects so that the key advances of knowledge come to it. Special Collections as broadly defined by Association of Research Libraries (ARL) – “include distinctive material in all media and attendant library services.” As per the dictionary definition, special collection is “a collection of materials segregated from a general library collection according to form, subject, age, condition, rarity, source, or value”.

1 Spaniolo, James D, President of University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). His remarks during the Fall Meeting of the University Faculty and Associates, at UTA, September 26, 2005 [cited: 2010-03-05]. Available at: [http://www.uta.edu/undergrad-assembly/UF05\\_09\\_26.html](http://www.uta.edu/undergrad-assembly/UF05_09_26.html)

In June of 2001, I attended the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Symposium, “Building on Strength: Developing an ARL Agenda for Special Collections,” at Brown University. This Symposium was a tipping point for us working in Special Collections, and we all agreed that what distinguishes academic or research libraries from each other are their Special Collections due to the unique resources that they hold. It was a very validating and inspiring experience, and it left me with a great feeling of optimism that finally special collections will come to be more recognized and visible, and stop having to justify *le raison d’être*.

As a result of this Symposium, ARL issued *Special Collections: Statement of Principles, Research Libraries and the Commitment to Special Collections*, stated below, and available on their web site.<sup>2</sup>

“Scholarly research depends ultimately on the availability of primary sources. Academic libraries preserve and provide such primary resources as part of their fundamental mission. Manuscripts or printed books or other artifacts or objects “born digital” are tangible marks of prior cultures, literary growth and development, and turning points in history. They are the means by which scholars document, investigate and interpret all our histories and cultures.

Members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), like other research libraries in this country and internationally, embrace the complex set of obligations imposed by our mission to provide primary resources. We collect, organize, maintain and preserve these primary research materials to meet the needs of our parent institutions, like them, to serve the needs of national and international scholarship. We view our commitment to primary resources as a critical component of our institutional mission and as an enduring contribution by research libraries to scholarship and learning.

As ARL libraries carry out these important functions, our Special Collections play a critical role. While many of our general collections are remarkable in their comprehensiveness or age, our Special Collections tend to the unique. They comprise manuscripts and archival collections unduplicated elsewhere and one-of-a-kind or rarely held books. They also include items precious through their rarity, monetary value, or their association with important figures or institutions in history, culture, politics, sciences, or the arts.

2 Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The unique role of special collections. Special collections. Statement of principles, 2003 [cited: 2010-19-02]. Available at: <http://www.arl.org/rtl/speccoll/speccollprinciples.shtml>

Special Collections extend beyond paper to other formats of cultural significance, for example photographs, moving pictures, architectural drawings, and digital archives. [...] Special Collections represent not only the heart of an academic library's mission, but one of the critical identifiers of an academic library. In academia scholarly research depends ultimately on the availability of primary sources.”

Yes, it is very inspiring to realize that Special Collections departments which historically have been in the periphery of events, somewhat marginalized, are now emerging as leaders in the academia. Librarians working in Special Collections are very optimistic and excited at the opportunities and potential of Special Collections because in recent years Special Collections have increasingly been recognized as central to the research and teaching missions of major libraries, and ultimately to their respective universities.

This renewed interest in their potential has raised a wide range of questions about the role and management of special collections. What do we expect of them and their curators? What level of resources should be allocated to them? How should those resources be managed? How can additional funding be obtained to develop them and services based upon them? How can the collections be better integrated into research and teaching programs. What role should Special Collections play in the digital library environment?<sup>3</sup>

### **Role, management & challenges of special collections**

What is different about the role of Special Collections in an emerging research university environment, what has changed since their role in a traditional university environment?

The fact is that the main role, functions and services in special collections have not changed, i.e., to acquire and preserve material, to process it, and to provide access to it. Also, outreach activities, exhibits, lectures, etc., remain very important functions of special collections, and finally the fundraising and development activities. Accordingly, the main operations and services have not changed but the new tools and the delivery of new innovative services have emerged in the digital age, with a new infrastructure, co-existing with the traditional one.

3 Between cultural management and research : special collections in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Organisation, services, resources. A series of workshops held in Weimar, Germany, November 22-25, 2005 [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: [http://www.initiativefortbildung.de/pdf/2005/sondersammlungen\\_engl.pdf](http://www.initiativefortbildung.de/pdf/2005/sondersammlungen_engl.pdf)

Most importantly, the new technology has changed how users interact with the library. Further, digital access has allowed an increasing number of users to locate and access our resources. For example, students indicate that Google is the search engine mostly used to begin their searches. So typically, when they type in a search query, if relevant to our holdings it brings our content to their desktops, informs them about copyright, permission request, reproduction options, policies, etc. This type of interacting with us represents the “new school” of users, which blaze through the Internet.

The main challenges, however, facing Special Collections in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century remain very similar to the ones that were facing them even in the former century, but augmented by new ones. Just to enumerate a few: limited resources, existing backlogs/hidden collections, under described material, complicated legal issues, “old school users” vs. “new school users”, and, swiftly evolving technological landscape. On the other hand, Special Collections should consider challenges as opportunities; therefore the opportunities are as never before to expose truly unique research materials by publishing finding aids online, e.g. Special Collections & University Archives at the University of Florida Central Libraries<sup>4</sup>; developing digital collections (both through institutional and consortia efforts), e.g. Central Florida Memory;<sup>5</sup> creating virtual exhibits, e.g. Smithsonian Institution Libraries’ Library and Archival Exhibition on the Web.<sup>6</sup> In addition, they can enhance access to their material by creating added value features to bibliographic records in the online catalogs, e.g. links to: finding aids from bibliographic records, annotated pages within a book, images of maps folded within a bound item, a full image of a manuscript document, and so forth.

**The 21<sup>st</sup> century belongs to Special Collections** and this is the century when they will flourish, and become essential centers for research and scholarship. They hold the unique primary source material, records of civilization, and of the cultural heritage. “This is our time,” so eloquently exclaimed Gary Strong, the University Librarian at the University of California (UCLA), to the audience filled with special collections

4 Special Collections & University Archives at the University of Florida Central Libraries [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://library.ucf.edu/SpecialCollections/Collections/ManuscriptsAlpha.asp#AD>

5 Central Florida Memory Project (CFM) [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://www.cfmemory.org/>

6 Smithsonian Institution Libraries. Library and Archival Exhibition on the Web [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://www.sil.si.edu/SILPublications/Online-Exhibitions>

librarians and archivists, during his opening remarks at the 2008 RBMS (Rare Books & Manuscripts Section) Preconference in Los Angeles.<sup>7</sup>

Yes, for us working in Special Collections this is our time but we must also realize that Google and other search engines have revolutionized the way our patrons access information. As per the commonly applied saying by the 21<sup>st</sup> century consumers in regard to any information, which actually applies perfectly to Special Collections material, “... if it’s not [described] online, it does not exist.” We in Special Collections must bring our content to their desktops, and mostly provide access to our hidden collections.

Based on a report by Cathy De Rosa et al., submitted to OCLC:<sup>8</sup>

- Students started their searches using a search engine, i.e. Google.
- Only 48% ended up at a library Web site.
- Of which only 41% went on to use the library Web site.
- But only 10% indicated that the library Web site fulfilled their information needs.
- While 27% indicated that they had to use other resources.

The data from the Report confirms that libraries are not reaching the millennium generation which they must target and bring to their resources, to ensure that they discover their materials. Further, based on the above data, numerous other surveys, and assessments, Special Collections have realized that libraries are not seen as a top choice for access to electronic resources. “Undergraduates live on the Web. They begin, and often finish their research with Google, and mostly use the library as a place to study.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore it is essential that Special Collections become proactive and that they react to this millennium generation.

What steps must Special Collections undertake to ensure that they fulfill their mission in the digital age? Special Collections must work with Systems departments to develop a digital research information structure enabling them to better connect to the global digital space housed on the web, and to take advantage of the opportunities

7 Rare and special bytes : special collections in the digital age, the 49th Annual RBMS Preconference, June 24-27, 2008, Los Angeles, California [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://unitproj.library.ucla.edu/special/rbms/>

8 De Rosa, Cathy [et al.]. College students’ perceptions of libraries and information resources : a report to the OCLC membership : a companion piece to the perceptions of libraries and information resources. Dublin, Ohio : OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., 2006 [cited: 2010-19-02]. Available at: <http://www.oclc.org/reports/pdfs/studentperceptions.pdf>

9 Lewis, David W. A strategy for academic libraries in the first quarter of the 21st century. // *College and research libraries* 68, 5(2007), 424.

for exposing their collections within that rich, interactive digital environment and opening it up to the world.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, partnerships and collaboration are critical to every aspect of their agenda. Where are their partners? Everywhere: in other library departments, in their colleges, in the administration, even in private sector, and, in the community. Lewis proposes, "... [a] Scholar's Collective would address the dual challenge of creating useful tools for humanities scholarship, while simultaneously creating capacity for collaboration [...] The Scholar's Collective is not a place; rather, it is a set of tools for the discovery, gathering, creating, and sharing of information. It will be web based, and, while it will have some traditional library functions built into it, it will not be the library."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Special Collections must bring their content to the desktops. Also, linking strategies have to be used, e.g. from the Web site to our online catalogs. The searching must be cross-referenced, and transparent. Special Collections must integrate their tools and resources into course management systems. Embed their resources into individual faculty courses, and explore Blogs aimed at individual courses, and even create a Facebook.<sup>12</sup>

Special Collections still have to cater to the "old school users" whose activities involve immersing into research in Special Collections departments. However, the combination of the "old" and "new school" seems to be the most common approach, especially for our students who do their work in front of a computer searching the Internet, at the same time reading from books laid next to the computer, and text-messaging, e-mailing or talking with their friends on cell phones.

The workload in Special Collections has increased due to the demands for maintaining the old infrastructure, and embracing the new one. In this digital environment, Special Collections have truly democratized access to their holdings, with a desire to make their primary sources available electronically worldwide. Now they must stay current with digital information management and adapt to millennium generation who consider the world of "amazoogle", to be everything they need and want, as noted earlier.

10 Brindley, Lynne. Paper assets in the digital age : speech given at the opening of the underground stacks west at the Swiss National Library Bern, 20 August 2009 [cited: 2010-19-02] Available at: [http://www.newsservice.admin.ch/NSBSubscriber/message/en/attachments/28467/58266/16500/Brindley\\_EN.pdf](http://www.newsservice.admin.ch/NSBSubscriber/message/en/attachments/28467/58266/16500/Brindley_EN.pdf)

11 Lewis, David. Op. cit., p. 424.

12 Special Collections & University Archives, University of Central Florida Libraries [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Orlando-FL/Special-Collections-University-Archives-UCF-Libraries/123996688633>

The mission has not changed either because in concert with the University mission and goals, Special Collections continue to support teaching, research, scholarship, to ensure development of new knowledge, and to contribute to the social economic growth in our society. It has never been a better time to work in academic libraries, and especially to work in Special Collections. **The 21<sup>st</sup> century belongs to Special Collections, and this is the century when they shall flourish, and become essential centers for research and scholarship.** They hold the unique primary source material, records of civilization, and records of cultural heritage.

At the end of 1990s, a survey was conducted among the scholarly community, and the respondents indicated as the highest priority to have the finding aids available online. Teen years later, we still hear comments from our users who are very grateful to have the finding aids available online, and able to browse through them down to the folder or even to the item level. Few years ago, while still at Washington State University Libraries, I assisted a patron from Switzerland with a reference inquiry, which ended up being a reproduction request. He was searching for a particular “Serenade fur Streichtrio” (a serenade for a string trio) by Hans Rosbaud, a deceased German composer. Through a Google search he discovered that exact “serenade” in the Hans Rosbaud’s Papers. The patron was ecstatic learning that we had it, and that it was so well described down to the item level. He immediately contacted me to inquire about our reproduction policies, and reproduction options.

**Yes, in this digital environment Special Collections have truly democratized access to their collections, with a desire to make their primary resources available electronically worldwide.** We all know that in democratic society Special Collections’ resources have always been available to patrons but often only reserved for in-house elite. Now everyone with an access to the Internet can browse through finding aids, and do a preliminary search to narrow down their needs, or to request reproductions. Another phenomenon has occurred, i.e. the increased reproduction requests – up by 75%, after having digitized so much of the content, which includes digital manifestations of photographs, maps, artifacts, documents, and oral history interviews through streamed audio, and even video (high cost/high value.) The off-site reference inquiries have also increased by an average of 75% for Special Collections.

All of these new services have multiplied the workload and forced Special Collections to constantly evaluate their workflow, and to streamline processes because as stated earlier they still continue to offer traditional service for their on-site users. It is a balancing act since the “old” and “new” must coexist. But again for any of us working in Special Collections it is very rewarding that we still continue to serve a steady and large population of on-site users, and to offer personal reference face to face in our quiet and elegant quarters. We are not threatened by the notion of old vs. new because old tools, service and infrastructure are nicely complemented by new innovative services via online reference inquiries, enhanced access to our resources, with the ultimate goal to bring content to the desktops.

As I am talking about Special Collections in this new emerging environment, you can see that I am constantly talking about traditional services and the new ones because they co-exist, and there is a seamless transition between the two. There are also links between the two, as well as between the online catalog and the web sites, so that the searching is transparent.

Having discussed Special Collections and their position in this new era, let me say a few words about what makes Special Collections great? Their collections, spaces and services make them great. What would it take to get from great to greater? As we talk with our patrons, we learn from them that they have great expectations for what they need to find. They expect to have access to many other things that we do not necessarily own. They also expect to have access to information from where ever they might be, whenever it might be, and whatever they might need. So, the delivery of information must be to where ever, whatever, whenever. This is a measure that Special Collections must strive for. Of course they need resources, which are declining so they need additional resources from administrators, and from donors who respond very well to demonstrated success and vision. Special Collections need to approach them with request for additional funding based on the things that they have put to good use: their digital databases, emphasize their success, stress their strengths, i.e. job expertise, and their service ethic/service orientation, and, return on investment, e.g. professional training and development. It is imperative that Special Collections inform University administrators, boards of trustees, legislators, and other members of the community about the obligations and responsibilities an institution assumes when it undertakes the stewardship of Special Collections of international importance.

## Collection development

Decisions regarding collection development policy have implications not only for researchers, but also for digitizing projects, collection management, and development of digital collections, “A good digital collection is created according to an explicit collection development policy.”<sup>13</sup>

Special Collections must have a Collection Development (CD) policy document (which should be a “live document”), to ensure that they: acquire material in concert with the mission of their university; that the existing collections, gifts, and purchases fulfill their main obligation, i.e. to support teaching and research; and, that they continue to support international community, due to its unique and rare material. The purpose of the collection development policy is intended to guide the selection of materials to be added to collections, whether by purchase, or through gifts. Also, the collection development policy is used: in the allocation of funds and in an effort to obtain additional funding from endowments, gifts, or grants; as a source of information for those both within and outside the Library community on the strengths of its collection; to identify those areas of lesser collecting interest; and, to assist in resource sharing and cooperative collection development arrangements with other libraries. The CD policy should always include Department’s mission statement, e.g.: “The mission of the University of Central Florida Libraries Special Collections and University Archives is to: provide services to the Library and University community in support of research, teaching and service. Special Collections acquires books that have a central function to the curriculum and that cannot be replaced and primary source materials that support long-term research goals. The University Archives is the official repository of all aspects of life at the University of Central Florida.”<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, it should include the scope both for the primary sources and printed collections, e.g.: African Americana; Book Arts and Book Artist’s Archive; Caribbean and the West Indies; Floridiana; Travel & Tourism; and, University Archives. General guidelines for collecting should include the language, chronological period, geographical scope treatment, and types of material. The

13 National Information Standards Organization (NISO). A framework of guidance for building good digital collections. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Dec 2007. Collections Principle 1, p. 4 [cited: 2010-05-03]. Available at: <http://www.niso.org/publications/rp/framework3.pdf>

14 University of Central Florida (UCF). Special Collections & University Archives, at University of Central Florida Libraries, website [cited: 2010-26-02]. Available at: <http://library.ucf.edu/SpecialCollections/AboutUs/CollectingPolicy.asp>

observations and qualifications must be specified, as to how the department's resources should be acquired; address collaboration with other repositories to ensure the appropriate home for the materials; and, clearly state terms under which the material should be accepted. There is a very useful resource available at the Rare Books & Manuscripts Section (RBMS) website which addresses some frequently asked questions about rare and older books and their values.<sup>15</sup> Important additional documents include the Deed of Gift Form;<sup>16</sup> the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); the Records Transfer Form; and, the Gift in Kind Form. In addition a couple of examples of very brief CD policies available are available on web sites of Special Collections & University Archives at University of Central Florida Libraries,<sup>17</sup> and Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections at Washington State University Libraries.<sup>18</sup>

Consequently, Special Collections must build their collections in keeping with institutional collection development policies, existing strengths, and regional or national commitments, and enter a new collection area only if there is a firm commitment to develop the collection and make it accessible to users. Therefore, Special Collections librarians must fulfill their liaison responsibilities by reaching out to their teaching faculty, and engaging with them, consulting with them in regard to new gifts or purchases. Furthermore, librarians must work collaboratively with appropriate partners to build collections in emerging areas of scholarly interest; and must broaden access to special collections by designing the most effective standards-based digitization projects. Finally, the University Archives chronicle and document the University's history and serve as the institutional history record or its "memory". The new challenge facing Special Collections is that currently the culture is changing, and the bulk of university correspondence, policies, etc., is being exchanged via e-mail. As we know, the president's papers have been invaluable resources among university archives holdings.

15 Rare Books & Manuscripts Section (RBMS) website [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://www.rbms.info/yob.shtml>

16 Society of American Archivists (SAA). A guide to deed of gift [cited: 2010-05-03]. Available at: [http://www.archivists.org/publications/deed\\_of\\_gift.asp](http://www.archivists.org/publications/deed_of_gift.asp)

17 Special Collections & University Archives at University of Central Florida Libraries [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://library.ucf.edu/SpecialCollections/AboutUs/CollectingPolicy.asp>

18 Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections at Washington State University Libraries [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/holland/masc/generalcollectionpolicy.html>

Now University Presidents mainly use e-mail for communication, and even text-messaging. How are Special Collections going to preserve the history? The same is applicable to faculty research and their papers which historically have been deposited in university archives. Librarians need to get hold of those and curate the content. Academic libraries have primarily "... purchased collections to support their local communities or organizations. [Secondly] they have curated special collections of unique or valuable items for the world. In the past, the first role was dominant. In the future it will be the second that will become most important. In the past, the collections that were curated were primarily manuscripts, and rare books. In the future, the bulk of what is curated will be digital [content]. A part will be digital versions of traditional special collections, but, increasingly, it will be born-digital documents and digital outputs of the research enterprise. Managing the former is reasonably well understood; managing the latter will be a challenge, especially as large data sets become common with real-time ubiquitous data collection in many areas of science (often referred to as e-science) and the social sciences."<sup>19</sup>

### **Policy on access**

Being special does not mean that Special Collections want to restrict or limit access to their material; on the contrary, their desire is to increase the use, by becoming more flexible in terms of allowing handling of their material, with of course balancing access and preservation. They must allow students to touch their precious resources. Also, the fact that they are called special makes them exclusive rather than inclusive, and less welcoming to their users, while they must aspire to be perceived as centers for research and scholarship.

Special Collections and Archives community have been eager to have the ACRL/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries, finalized and approved by the ACRL Board during the ALA Annual Conference, July 2009.<sup>20</sup>

As stated earlier openness and access is very important and therefore, Special Collections material must be processed and cataloged in

19 Lewis, David W. Op. cit., p. 426.

20 Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL). ACRL/SAA Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL). ACRL/SAA Joint statement on access to research materials in archives and special collections libraries / approved by the ACRL Board during the ALA Annual Conference, July 2009 [cited: 2010-04-03]. Available at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/jointstatement.cfm>

order to be accessible. However, Special Collections must always balance preservation vs. access to ensure longevity for future access but again there is nothing like an excitement expressed by an undergraduate student when touching and holding an incunabulum or a rare manuscript. Nothing can really replace that feeling of holding and touching the original physical item.

It is very commendable that faculty continue to bring their students to Special Collections, and request presentations because they want them to learn about the history of the book, the history of printing, and different formats that Special Collections hold, which is in support of the “old school”. They feel that at this time and age, students more than ever before must be offered the opportunity to connect with physical, old and rare items. It is so gratifying for librarians to see the expression on students’ faces, as they touch, and hold the original items in their hands, which is often followed by a comment: “this is so awesome!” They immediately develop a connection to history, an understanding of the past, and an appreciation for the material, which constantly proves to be an invaluable educational experience, and a tipping point for bringing the students back to Special Collections.

### **Exhibits**

The exhibits have always been one of Special Collections programs, which have served as outreach efforts and to publicize their collections. In addition, Special Collections have often worked with faculty to develop opportunities for graduate student-curated exhibits which has been very beneficial both for students, and for curators. Special Collections still install and curate exhibits in-house, but they also put them on their web sites, therefore they become accessible to a much larger audience, which allows viewing after hours. Mostly, as exhibits become virtually available on web sites, they serve as the best advertisement of Special Collections resources and attract more patrons to their departments. There is even a link from the Smithsonian Institution Libraries web site to individual exhibits online, called “Library and Archival Exhibitions on the Web”.<sup>21</sup>

21 Smithsonian Institution Libraries. Library and Archival Exhibitions on the Web [cited: 2010-09-03]. Available at: <http://www.sil.si.edu/SILPublications/Online-Exhibitions/search.htm>

### **Planning and managing digital projects in special collections**

The digital infrastructure is in place, with databases, equipment, and new standards for creation of metadata. The scanning process in itself is inexpensive once you have the equipment and the library staff but what makes the information searchable, discoverable and functional is the integrated metadata, which must be robust and good. Creation of metadata is very expensive but there is no digitization without metadata! Also, the digital environment offers tremendous opportunities for collaboration among institutions, libraries, museums, and archives. We librarians have always been very good at collaborating and it is something that comes natural to us, so we must cease the moment and embark on joint projects. The state libraries, and other funding agencies, e.g. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), love collaborative projects, and are much more willing to fund those, rather than of a single library funding request (e.g. CFM, PALMM, dLOC).<sup>22</sup> So everyone gains with the high cost/high value effort. Special Collections get much needed external funding, and users get a “one stop shopping” in a web site that virtually displays, and pulls together all scattered collections among different institutions.

As Special Collections embark on creating digital databases or engage in any digitization efforts, it is important to have the “pre-production” phase in order to consider: type of projects, e.g. manuscripts, visual images, and artifacts; state of collections in terms of access and description level, e.g. at item or folder level; physical condition of items; copyright status; infrastructure to include production and publication in-house or outsourced; the level of staff training depending on their experience with technology, engaging professional staff vs. students and volunteers; funding either to be provided by institutional or external funds (e.g. endowments, monetary contributions, or grants). Once the above enumerated steps are fully addressed and accomplished, a given Special Collections Department must have: digital project goals, digitization criteria, management of digital assets, and, standards for which guidelines are freely available online. Important to note is that

22 Central Florida Memory Project (CFM) [cited: 2010-26-02]. Available at: <http://www.cfmemory.org/>; Publication of Archival, Library, Museum Material (PALMM) [cited: 2010-26-02]. Available at: <http://palmm.fcla.edu/>; Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) [cited: 2010-26-02]. Available at: <http://web1.dloc.com/ufdc/>

metadata standards<sup>23</sup> should be followed for description purposes, and for the usage of metadata which is essential for the material to be discovered. The digital content, i.e. digital collections must be curated in the same fashion as any other physical collections. The primary purpose of descriptive metadata is to assist researchers in the discovery of resources relevant to their research objectives, and to assist general and/or potential audience in discovery of resources relevant to their needs. Metadata is essential and it is the backbone of digital curation. Without metadata a digital resource may be irretrievable, unidentifiable or unusable. Metadata is descriptive or contextual information which refers to, or is associated with, another object or resource. Metadata consists of a structured set of elements which describe the information resource and assist in the identification, location and retrieval of it by users, while facilitating content and access management. Metadata standards formalize the element structure to ensure that the aims of a user community can be fulfilled. The use of metadata standards ensure: rich, consistent metadata which will support the long-term discovery, use and integrity of digital resources; as well as effective searching, improved digital curation and the possibility of sharing. The metadata standards enable interoperability – metadata from a variety of sources can be integrated into other technical systems or machine read by compatible ones, also, the potential for resource discovery is much greater. There are different types of metadata standards which are used interdependently to achieve the following aims: metadata structure standards ensure consistent structure across individual entries, and enable data searching to be implemented and data sharing across a discipline. Hierarchical structure standards enable context as well as content to be described. *Metadata content rules* enable consistent data entry for effective searching. Content rules include: controlled vocabularies, authority files, thesauri, and classifications.

It is necessary to ensure metadata consistency and uniformity by developing: metadata guidelines for an institution or for consortia, best practices for an institution or for consortia, and, mapping guidelines for topical collections. For cost effectiveness it is also necessary to provide training opportunities, and ideally train the trainers.

23 Dublin Core (DC) [cited: 2010-05-03]. Available at: <http://dublincore.org/>; Metadata Encoding & Transmission Standard (METS) [cited: 2010-05-03]. Available at: <http://www.loc.gov/standards/mets/>; Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS) [cited 2010-05-03]. Available at: <http://www.loc.gov/standards/mods/>; Visual Research Association data standards (VRA) [cited: 2010-05-03]. Available at: <http://www.vrweb.org/projects/vracore4/>

Why do Special Collections digitize their resources? The answers are over simplistic but still important to note. They digitize to provide: better access, added value to their holdings, preserve fragile materials, support educational and research activities of institution, fulfill strategic mission and goals of institution, support collection management and preservation, make information and assets more readily available, provide material for educational programs and address curriculum needs, provide materials for curators and researchers (internal and external), and eliminate redundant work and creation of redundant assets (photographs, slides, digital images, etc.). The types of digital projects include: special and archival collections, reformatting content from other non-print resources, born digital projects, and digitization projects in a consortium. For any types of digital project, a selection criterion considers: scarcity – how scarce or rare is a given item or collection, access relative to research availability, physical condition and format, intrinsic/monetary value, evidential value, and archival/historical/continuing/enduring value. With budget constraints, it is important to think about cost effectiveness, e.g. scanning and color mode, pdf versus html for text documents, text searching, variety of formats, and identify projects. Contributing any digital content on the Internet constitutes “publishing” on the Internet. Accordingly it must be determined who owns the copyright, is it in the public domain, has the copyright on the item expired, and finally, is it possible to obtain permission and to publish it with or without conditions/restrictions?

The planning of the workflows is of utmost importance for cost effectiveness and successful completion of digitized projects. The items to consider: is the collection ready to go, is there a finding-aid, e.g. HTML or encoded archival description (EAD), does the material require any preservation/conservation treatments? It is highly recommended to develop a Time Table which should ensure efficiency and streamline the process. Also, to determine the linear line fashion model vs. parallel tracks, time line for scanning, metadata, and quality control.

It is important to note that once the material is published on the Internet, it can be “misused”. Therefore, provide good quality image but not good enough for publication use, e.g. smaller size, and provide hi resolution images on demand. Each special Collections department should have the Reproduction Cost Form, and the Reproduction Request Form that states terms of use. Having material digitized, has a direct impact on public services due to increased digital and web pres-

Time Table	2010												2011
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	
Hire and Train Staff													
Sort and Organize Materials													
Select Items for Digitization													
Scanning													
Separate Items from the Collection that Require Individual MARC Records													
Create Individual MARC Records													
Process and Describe the Collection													
Digital Content Management/Metadata in CONTENTdm													
Create an EAD Finding Aid													
Create MARC Record for the Collection													
Link Digitized Images to the Finding Aid													
Upload the Finding Aid to the Web Site													
Contribute the Finding Aid to Archives Florida and ArchiveGrid													
Create Web Interface													

TABLE 1.  
Sample Time Table for creating digital collections

ence which requires more time and staff to handle questions, reproduction orders, permission requests, etc., and it is recommended to have policies, reproduction costs and permission request forms available online. In summary, I would like to stress again that any digitization project should start with a project plan, goals and objectives to achieve, selection process and criteria, research time, digital image creation, metadata creation, promotion and assessment, and long-term preservation/sustainability. At present there is a wealth of resources available freely online, e.g. *A Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., December 2007), a NISO Recommended practice, prepared by the NISO WG with support from IMLS.<sup>24</sup>

## Conclusion

To conclude I want to state again that Special Collections have traditionally existed to collect and to organize information, make access to knowledge more democratic, and to preserve the record of ideas for future generations. Now information is ubiquitous: 500 million web pages are just a keystroke away. Their content mutates constantly, and it is subject to no structure. Google and other search engines have revolutionized the way our patrons access information. How do we redefine the role of Special Collections in such a rapidly changing environment?

24 National Information Standards Organization (NISO). A framework of guidance for building good digital collections [cited: 2010-19-02]. Available at: <http://www.niso.org/publications/tp/framework3.pdf>

Clearly, we will continue to collect print, manuscripts, and other traditional material. However, in today's new environment that is not sufficient, and there are new challenges that we must address. What steps must we take to ensure that we fulfill our mission in the digital age?<sup>25</sup>

**“You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.”** – Yogi Berra (one of baseball greatest treasures).<sup>26</sup> Well, we know where we are going but before we get there, we have yet a long way to go. We need the means and the tools to get there. So, we need to stress upon you our administrators, that we need their strong support for future development of special collections **(to get there)**, i.e. to become centers for research and scholarship.

To get there, it is essential that we market our services and highlight our unique material, to demonstrate Special Collections’ value to the institutional mission, and to advocate the institutional advantage of having Special Collections – the only collections that distinguishes one library from another.<sup>27</sup> We must realize that our patrons do not care about silos, they want to find the “staff” – therefore we must increase access, and provide access to digital material; process our hidden collections (collections only acquired have only potential value); consider “new ways” of cataloging printed material; link scattered collections among institutions; forge new partnerships with our constituencies; get out of the reading room, into the classrooms; collaborate with digital services to bring more content to the desktops.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, we must become creative due to the current “budget crisis”; become more selective with purchases and gifts – tend to uniqueness, reassess what we bring through the door; start collecting what is most threatened, e.g. ephemera, punk memorabilia, born digital – as a service to our users; provide internship opportunities to students – return on investment, e.g. processing, exhibits, digital projects, etc.; collaborate, develop partnerships, and build consortia.<sup>29</sup>

25 British Library. Redefining the library : The British Library’s strategy, 2005-2008:8 [cited: 2010-19-02]. Available at: <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/strategy0811/blstrategy20052008.pdf>

26 Berra, Yogi. *The Yogi book*. New York : The Workman Publishing, 1998. P. 102.

27 Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Transformative issues for special collections in ARL libraries, webcasted on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. (please confer the News Press Release [cited: 2010-19-02]. Available at: <http://www.arl.org/news/pr/spec-coll-10june09.shtml>. N.B. This webcast is no longer available.

28 Ibid.

29 Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Special collections in ARL libraries. The full text of the original report of the ARL Special Collections Working Group is freely available. [Cited: 2010-19-02]. Available at: <http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/scwg-report.pdf>

Now, I would like to share with all of you just a few additional points. Couple of years ago, I was reading an article by David Levy *Contemplating Scholarship in Digital Age*. He talks about the fast pace that we live in, and all the gadgets that occupy us. His concern is that people engage less in scholarship: “Today’s academic life, I have discovered firsthand, is hardly leisure. Almost entirely missing is the time to read and reflect; the time to muse and to absorb; the time to *think*. The slow time needed for scholarship is consistently overridden by the fast time of teaching and administrative duties.”<sup>30</sup> Then he refers to Josef Pieper, a German philosopher and theologian, who in 1948 published *Musse un Kult* (English translation: *Leisure the Basis of Culture*).<sup>31</sup> But by leisure Pieper did not mean what is typically meant today: pursuing recreational activities and time off. Instead he meant the recovery of the Greek notion of leisure because for the Greeks, leisure was the highest good, the ultimate aim of human life, and work was a lesser, though still necessary, form of activity. Work was what needed to be done for the sake of something else: spinning wool in order to make clothing, lighting a fire in order to keep warm, building a house in order to be sheltered from the elements. Leisure, by contrast, was that which required no justification beyond itself; philosophy, the arts, and the celebration of festivals fell under this category for the Greeks because they were simply an expression of the human spirit and its true life in the world.

“[Pieper] noted that the words *school*, *scholar*, and *scholarship* are all derived from the Latin *schola*, which is itself derived from the Greek word for leisure (*skhole*).”<sup>32</sup>

Levy also discusses a library as a peaceful place and to support his argument he mentions a two-page advertisement in the Sunday *New York Times* magazine (August 2002) for the IBM ThinkPad laptop. It showed a man wearing a business suit sitting with his laptop open on his lap in the stacks of a library. The ad copy read, “In deep halcyon repose”, and below this it gave the dictionary definition for *halcyon* as “peaceful.” What the ad was saying seemed clear enough: You can take this laptop anywhere, even to places such as the library, where you’ll get some peace and quiet.<sup>33</sup>

30 Levy, David. *Contemplating scholarship in the digital age*. // *RBM : a journal of rare books, manuscripts, and cultural heritage* 6, 2(Fall 2005), 70.

31 Pieper, Josef. *Leisure : the basis of culture*. South Bend, Indiana : St. Augustine Press, 1998.

32 Levy, D. *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 75.



Locher, Jacob.  
*Panegyricus ad Maximilianum.*  
Strassburg, 1497.

...that perfect tranquility of life,  
which is nowhere to be found  
but in retreat, a faithful friend,  
and a good library...

--Aphra Behn--

ILLUSTRATION 1.

Locher, Jacob. *Panegyricus ad Maximilianum*. *Tragoedia de Turcis et Soldano*. *Dialogus de heresiarchis*. Strassburg, Johann Reinhard Grüninger, 1497.

It is naturally, that when we think of scholarship we think of going to the library, the peaceful and quite Special Collections quarters and plunging into its resources. “There is nothing like [...] that perfect tranquility of life, which is nowhere to be found but in retreat, a faithful friend, and a good library [...]” – Aphra Behn (English dramatist, novelist & poet, 1640-1689).

Yes, we aspire to position libraries as a person’s “third place.” The first place is the home, the second place their work place, and the third place should be a library, a protected physical place, a sanctuary, where one can read, reflect, study, and contemplate. Also a fun place where one can have cappuccino and visit with friends, as wells as a place where people seek and find information, what they need, when they need it, from wherever they might be, at whatever time of the day it might be. In the new digital age that third place is not only limited to a library building but also to a virtual site, which nicely segues into my final statement for special collections in digital age, **we must bring the content to the desktops and process our hidden collections.**

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## Biographical sketch

Laila Miletic-Vejzovic, MLS, heads Special Collections and University Archives at University of Central Florida (UCF) Libraries. She joined the UCF library faculty after 19 years at Washington State University (WSU), where she had been head of Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections. Ms. Miletic-Vejzovic began her career as a librarian in 1986, at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, after obtaining her MLS from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Her numerous awards include two Fulbright Scholar Awards in 1992 and 2004, a Fulbright Senior Specialist Grant in 2002-2003, two International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) grants in 1997 and 2000. In 1996, she was selected to attend the Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration at Bryn Mawr College. She has served as a member of the Washington State Historical Records Advisory Board, and as a member of the WSU Press Editorial Board. Currently, she is a member of the *OCLC Systems & Services* Editorial Advisory Board.

## UPRAVLJANJE ZBIRKAMA POSEBNE VRSTE GRAĐE S NAGLASKOM NA PROJEKTE DIGITALIZACIJE

### Sažetak

Glavna je svrha ovoga rada propitati ulogu i upravljanje zbirka posebne vrste građe u suvremenom sveučilišnom okruženju. Nadalje, svrha mu je dati uvod u načela i praksu upravljanja zbirka posebne vrste građe s naglaskom na ciljeve projekata digitalizacije, kriterije digitalizacije te upravljanje digitalnim dobrom. Pod pretpostavkom da dobre digitalne zbirke nastaju prema jasno izraženoj politici razvoja zbirke, rad daje specifične smjernice za razvoj politike razvoja zbirke. Znanstveno istraživanje i zaštita građe uživaju nebrojene prednosti izgradnjom digitalnih zbirki koje dramatično otvaraju pristup jedinstvenoj i rijetkoj građi u fondovima zbirski posebne vrste građe. Međutim, da bi se građa otkrila bitni su metapodaci jer sama digitalizacija bez metapodataka ne može opstati, tako da dobre digitalne zbirke moraju uključivati opisne metapodatke za pretraživanje izrađene u skladu s dobrim praksama i dostupnim standardima. Google i pretraživači revolucionarizirali su način na koji korisnici pristupaju informacijama. Stoga zbirke posebne vrste građe trebaju dovesti svoj sadržaj na njihove radne površine i obraditi svoje skrivene zbirke.

**Ključne riječi:** sveučilišne knjižnice, zbirke posebne vrste građe, razvoj zbirki, digitalizacija, upravljanje zbirka, SAD