Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’: Maximizing Staff Skills and Technology to Enhance Access to Special Collections

Sarah Buchanan
June 23, 2012

Anaheim, Calif.
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’:

General Background:

Context of Special Collections and Rare Books

Collection-Level Cataloging
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’

**Context: Special Collections**

- “Exposing Hidden Collections” 2003:
  - A snapshot, a turning point
- ARL survey (1998)
- ARL Special Collections Task Force (2001-2006)
- OCLC Research “Taking Our Pulse” survey (2009-10) and UK/Ireland survey (2011-current)
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’

Context: Special Collections

• National ideas, local procedures (catalogs, OPACs)

• Institutional descriptive goals

• Backlogs consist of...
  – Multiple collections
  – Multiple formats
Name That Catalog!
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’

Context: Rare Books

• a balance: the Collection … and the Item
  – e.g. Archival objects in bibliographic collections

• Workflow consultation:
  – Archival access
  – Library technical services
  – Graduate / continuing education in both

• Environment and institutional structure
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’

Context: Rare Books

• National initiatives … Local practices

500 Field: Mandatory notes:

• Source of information if not the chief source of information.
• Any deviation from a strict transcription of evidence.
• Presence of errata.
• Presence of subscriber’s lists.
• Presence of booksellers’ or publishers’ advertisements for pre-1830 imprints.
• Presence of wrappers or dust jackets.
• Presence of half-title pages.
• Indications of imperfection.

300 Field:

• Provide pagination and foliation statements that account for every page or leaf in the book.
• Provide an indication of bibliographical format (e.g., fol., 4to, 8vo, 12mo) when possible. This can sometimes be difficult to determine and may require the assistance of someone with special expertise. Do not guess.

DCRM(B)

In order to meet these special objectives and user needs, rare materials (see Appendix 1) should be cataloged using the manual, Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books) (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2007), which is itself the authorized Library of Congress interpretation of AACR2 2.12-2.18 (section on “Early printed monographs”).

The following features of DCRM(B) rules and local applications should be noted in particular:
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’

Context: Rare Books

• Standards development
  – ALA/ACRL/RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee
  – Seven manuals (DCRM)

• Cataloging Collections

• Cataloging Items

• Purposes of description:
  for Catalogers,
  for Patrons,
  access: online, onsite, preventing inst. backlogs,
  record as surrogate or impetus (to page it!)
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’

**Collection-level Cataloging**

- **Why at the collection level?**
  - Monograph collection development
    - Unique provenance(s)
    - Cross-communication of institutional strengths
  - Local catalogs have institution-specific notes
    - Patron researchers
    - WorldCat Local Special Collections Task Force reports (2008- )
  - High volume = limited time to spend per item
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’

Collection-level Cataloging

• Future directions:
  – Linking library catalog records
    • Coordination of resource guides and tools
    • Linked Data, collection codes (SPACs)
  – Small backlog, many benefits
    • Prevents duplicity, saves $$$ (to acquire, to research-travel)
Resources

• Importance of Cataloging:

• SPACs (Special Collections and Archives Code)

• LIS Education (cataloging)
  – Catalogers Learning Workshop (by PCC). See also Rare Book Schools; ALISE; iSchools, etc.
• **MPLP**

• **RBMS publications**

• **Special Collections**

• **UIUC**: “Quick & Clean Cataloging Project.”
  [http://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/qnc/policies/dcrmb.html](http://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/qnc/policies/dcrmb.html).
Digging into Our ‘Hidden Collections’

Thank you!

- Sarah A. Buchanan
  sarahab@utexas.edu

Doctoral student, Information Studies, UT Austin