

Notes from the Joint meeting of the Curators and Conservators Discussion Group and the Public Services Discussion Group
Sunday, January 9, 2011
8:00 am until 10:00 am,
Hilton San Diego Bay Front Hotel

In attendance: Beth Kilmarx, Dennis J. Moser, Susan Walker, Janice Comer, Beth Remak-Kennef, Laura Bedford, Donia Conn, Jessica O'Toole, Nancy Stanfill, Cindy Krolikowski, Brent Strange, Scott Duvall, Joellen Dickie, Lois Fischer Black, Catherine Uecker, Melinda Haye, Cynthia Becht, Christine Megowan, Laila Miletic-Vejzovic, Heather Smedberg, Bobbie Pilette, Adrienne Bell, Jennifer Nelson.

Curators and Conservators Discussion Group invited the Public Services Discussion Group to join it for the Midwinter 2011 meeting in San Diego. Beth Kilmarx and Dennis Moser co-chaired the discussion, with Susan Walker recording. The main question under discussion was: **How are libraries dealing with the increasing demand for digital reproductions?**

Responses addressed such aspects as current projects, prioritization, and who initiates the request for digitization; whether and how much the repository charges for images; how metadata is handled; searching for images; preservation of digital files; training for handling; extent of collection to be digitized; and allowing digital cameras in the reading room.

Participants reported collections being digitized range from photographs and postcards to early manuscripts and materials from the archives and one-of-a-kind books in the public domain. A number typically do not digitize books in their entirety, although some do and others consider doing so when the item is unique or in high demand or for preservation. Many indicated that the priorities are driven by patron requests or are project-driven, in some cases prompted by a significant institutional event such as a big anniversary year, which tend to preempt other ongoing digital initiatives. A number of institutions have committees to determine priorities for digitization, and in one case there is a collection development policy for digital projects.

A couple of institutions do not charge images as there was no staff to handle payments, or they outsource image provision for that reason, while another only charges for newly-created images and not for orders from existing ones, yet another noted it charges more for an image than it actually costs now to produce, and another only charges outside requests.

The subject of metadata came up, and there were a variety of responses to how complete it needs to be, who creates it, and how it is created. While one institution is prohibited by its dean from making any images public without full metadata yet provides access to images with less-than-minimal metadata through restrictions by IP address to on-campus only, another enables public discovery by providing temporary minimal metadata which is later overlaid by full-level records from an ongoing cataloging project. Some use a separate digital database while others enter the metadata into the online catalog. The importance of being able to find the images one way or another once they are created without having to rely on memory was recognized. This applies to image file management as well.

Solutions to storage and preservation are also varied. Many still wrestle with solutions for storing images for long-term preservation on institutional servers, in some cases because of the size required. Even bigger problems for storage than text are the very large audio and video files. Places mentioned where digital files are sent for off-site storage include the Internet Archive and OCLC, and while it was not necessarily possible to say exactly what works and what doesn't, there were a number of tools mentioned that are being used, including Fedora, Rosetta, ContentDM, and BPress. The importance of preparing for a future solution that would enable seamless integration and involve an institutional repository was stressed, as was the need for a single person to act as overseer.

Also addressed was the topic of assessing condition of materials to be digitized and determining whether and how often to scan/photograph them as well as the hiring and training of staff (especially students) in handling these

items for digitization. In-person seminars, powerpoint presentations, and hands-on training are used, and a general interest was expressed for an upcoming seminar and possible future workshops on handling training. A couple of people commented that their repositories are trying to phase out photocopying and replace it with scanning instead.

Policies and practices surrounding the use of digital cameras in the reading room also came up, and there were several who indicated the decision is made on a case-by-case basis. More than one who do allow it require a transparency be placed over the item being photographed stating the images are for research purposes only. Others do not allow patrons to take their own photographs but rather provide images for patrons and in some cases add the images to digital collections. A recent publication offering guidelines on practices for cameras in the Reading Room (possibly "*Capture and Release": Digital Cameras in the Reading Room*) was referred to for reference.

Suggestions were solicited for Public Services Discussion Group topics for the Annual Meeting in New Orleans in June.