

RBMS Manuscripts & Other Formats Discussion Group
Saturday, January 8, 2011, 1:30 -3:30 pm
Westin Gaslamp. Santa Fe
San Diego, CA

Twenty attendees met Saturday afternoon to discuss topics relevant to Manuscripts and Other Formats. Those present began with reports on grants and collections received, as well as news of initiatives such as digitization projects.

Discussion quickly shifted to our primary topic, "innovation in instruction." Attendees shared accounts of their efforts to engage faculty and students in the use of unpublished collections.

One intriguing class assignment mentioned required use of three primary source items, two of which were required to be drawn from the institution's own Special Collections. Other projects described entailed the transcription of diaries and letters that would ultimately serve as the foundation for a digital project. However, the most common outcome of classroom assignments shared was exhibits. Many of those present described internships and class projects which culminated in the installation of physical and virtual exhibits.

Conversation next shifted to community use of collections. In addition to the genealogists we often see in Special Collections, mention was made of artists in residence who create work based on collections, including both art and performance pieces. Participants also described community events, such as city-wide archives fairs used as marketing opportunities to promote use by non-traditional audiences.

Attention next shifted toward our final discussion topic of the session, preservation of those "pesky" other formats. Attendees acknowledged that we all have audio and video formats in our collections. As this topic merits more attention, we will revisit LPs, VHS cassettes, reel-to-reel tapes, and other formats in New Orleans. Attendees expressed interest in discussing reformatting and learning about grant funding with which to accomplish this.