

Minutes

Technical Services Discussion Group

ALA Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA

Sunday, 26 June 2011

Sheraton New Orleans - Gallery

10:30 a.m.

Attending: Randal Brandt, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley; Stephen Skuce, MIT; Audrey Pearson, MIT, Catherine Uecker, U. of Chicago; Tiffany McGregor, Newmann U.; Miloch Kottman, U. of Kansas; Deborah J. Leslie, Folger Shakespeare Library; Scott Carlisle, Princeton; Michelle Mascaro, U. of Akron; Christine Megowan, Loyola Marymount U.; Ann Myers, Southern Illinois U.; Arvid Nelsen, U. of Minnesota; Emily Epstein, U. of Colorado Health Sciences Library; Christine De Zelar-Tiedman, U. of Minnesota; Elizabeth Johnson, Indiana; Jennifer Nelson, Robbins Collection, UC Berkeley; Margaret Nichols, Cornell; Jennifer Lowe, Saint Louis U.; Kate Moriarty, Saint Louis U.; Jane Carpenter, UCLA; Becky Fenning, Clark Library, UCLA; Martha Lawler, LSU-Shreveport; Molly Porenski, Vanderbilt; Ellen Cordes, Lewis Walpole Library, Yale; Megan Lewis, Duke; Becky Filner, NYPL/Berg Collection; Deb DeGeorge, U. of Michigan; Larry Mitchell, Texas A & M; Susan Pysynski; Houghton Library, Harvard; Kate James, Library of Congress; Mary Lacy, Library of Congress; Sue Walker, Lewis Walpole Library, Yale; Hjordis Halvorson, Newberry Library, Chicago; Valerie Buck, Brigham Young U.; Libby McDaniel, Virginia Commonwealth U.; Alvan Bregman, U. of British Columbia; Elizabeth Robinson, Library of Congress.

Co-Convenors: Annie Copeland, Penn State; Ellen Ellickson, Yale

1.) Welcome and introductions

2.) *Discussion topic:* Ephemera within books: How do catalogers treat ephemera within books? Do you remove them? If so, where are they housed? What kind of record is kept? If the ephemera are kept in the book, is a note made? Do your libraries have policies about this?

Practices regarding ephemera within books varies greatly from institution to institution. Some participants reported that they remove all ephemera and place it in a paper file with a note in the bib record. Others said that they did the same but put their notes in the holdings record instead of the bib record. Still others said that they remove the ephemera and place it in a folder and then shelve it with the item from which it was removed. Another practice noted was to put the ephemera in mylar and keep it in the book. Still another practice is to make an acid-free photocopy of any ephemera, leave the photocopy in the book and shelve the original elsewhere. It was generally agreed that preservation/conservation folks should be consulted when developing library policies about ephemera in books.

3.) Discussion topic: Next Gen catalogs: faceted searching, single search boxes: Have the new generation of public catalogs affected cataloging practice in any ways? Are facets changing the way we catalog special collections materials? Are we adding local notes differently to aid in discovery?

Faceted searching was described for those in the group who were not familiar with it. It was remarked that the newer catalogs were developed with Google and Amazon searching in mind because it is that type of searching that students have become used to. Participants said that many of their institutions have both their standard “classic” catalogs and a newer, Next Gen catalog with faceted searching. The newer catalog is often in a beta form but it is expected that this type of catalog will stay around and the “classic” type will disappear in the next ten years. Several voiced a concern that we will eventually lose the ability to do a browse search with these new catalogs. Many of these systems contain very powerful discovery tools that search across finding aids, local repositories, and digital collections, serving archives and special collections materials well. Others have been designed to favor databases, with books falling to the bottom of any result set. In general, special collections librarians that have a role in the implementation have been happier with the outcome than those who have not been consulted.

4.) Discussion topic: Technical services in the financial downturn: How are technical services departments coping with tightened budgets? Have cataloging activities changed? Are people doing less item-level cataloging and more collection-level cataloging? Are they doing less DCRM cataloging? Are they putting less information in their records? Have any of the changes been positive ones?

Participants reported different experiences as a result of the financial downturn that began in fall 2008. Some said that at their institutions they felt the financial pinch very quickly, in that fewer students were hired to help out in technical services departments and professional staff had to take on such tasks as retrospective barcoding. In other institutions there were periodic furloughs of staff, collection development funds were reduced, retirement packages were offered and the resulting vacant positions were often not filled. It was reported that a number of catalogers were encouraged to create more collection-level records. As far as possible silver linings within the downturn, some tech services departments were reorganized—streamlined, perhaps—and there was testimony about at least one consulting group advising several institutions to reorganize so that special collections would be favored in terms of staff and resources because it is in special collections that an institutions unique holdings reside.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Copeland
Ellen Ellickson