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**Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control Public Meeting
“Economics and Organization of Bibliographic Data - Special Libraries
Perspective”**

Special librarians recognize the need to change how we have done things with bibliographic control and to focus more tightly on the things that only we can do. Some of us manage proprietary information and we cannot share it -- often our organizations are global and our physical footprint doesn't provide access to our collections. Like all librarians, we face the blurring of the distinction between ownership and access, between physical and digital, between purchased and home grown, between published works and documents, between print and media. And we think we need to manage it all.

At the National Geographic, we face the obvious conundrum of geometrically increasing digital information, old and new formats and media, and managing not only our traditional collections but also the invisible business content and legacy material, born digital, that reside with our users for which there are no access or retention strategies. We realize we cannot aspire to provide perfect cataloging to everything. We are setting priorities based on vulnerability and value to the organization for what gets cataloged or indexed, while we train our users to do their part and then to make sense of the rest of it.

In terms of bibliographic control, special librarians see our jobs today to:

- develop and harmonize taxonomies across our organizations
- structure the databases and content management systems to ingest and provide access to our content
- teach and coach our content creators to enhance it with useful metadata that can be mapped to taxonomies
- improve search because our users expect a Google-like federated search against all the organizational and web content -- not just traditional library content
- provide expert oversight to ensure relative consistency and accuracy
- continue to make the case to resource providers to see the content we manage as organizational assets
- help our users bridge both print and electronic resources to ensure they have the information they need to make our organizations competitive today and in the future

In the next nine minutes I expect to:

- Review our commonality
- Talk about specific formats
- Address special library needs
- Advise how Library of Congress can help

Our Commonality is in our Comfort Zone

Some special libraries are still buying and managing print collections by using electronic catalogs and indexes to point to our content, all the while recognizing that our customers mostly want the content in their digital universe. Some of us no longer have print collections and are focused on providing our customers with the best finding aids to electronic content.

We help our users create content from the materials we buy and manage. Our users can find plenty of information -- so our job is to filter, synthesize and analyze content -- help our users connect the dots to recognize the competitive intelligence, trends, history of our organizations.

We are also cataloging and indexing the publications, artifacts, documents, photos, films, maps created by our organizations. When there are multiple taxonomies, we are working to harmonize them to ensure there will be a single reference point to map content to.

We see that in a future 3-D web world, users will expect to see content expressed in new ways. At the Geographic, we are working to associate latitude and longitude to the content our organizations create to enable us to do mash-ups and create new map content more easily.

Drilling down to Specific Formats

Books, maps, serials, and published content. We mostly still use Marc and OCLC for cataloging and indexing of published content -- ranging from simple Marc for maps and ephemera to detailed cataloging for rare books and archival materials -- focusing our resources on the most valuable based on potential usage or inherent value or the most vulnerable in terms of access. Special libraries that have unique proprietary materials are too small and often don't participate in consortiums.

Images. Special libraries and archives found that along with the challenges of preserving vulnerable film collections, digital photography has liberated photographers from film, so that now we are seeing ten times more photos to review, select from and index. This includes all the rights information surrounding the photos, as well as payment information if an image is used. We create incentives for our photographers to provide keywords and metadata based on a hierarchy and drop down choices that we provide, enabling them to identify species, behavior, location, and add descriptors in a free text space. The better cataloging they do, the more likely someone is to find their content and be willing to purchase it. Typically catalogers and photo interns review photographer cataloging and add conceptual terms (ferocious shark) as they review for consistency, and other information such as image orientation (horizontal or vertical). Contractually our digital files must have IPTC embedded - date film shot, name of shooter, rights

information and will soon include GPS content. This information is getting more specific and hopefully will enable us to keep pace with the wave of digital image photos.*

Digital Media and Film. Special libraries may be responsible for large collections of film or digital media. We are buying digital content management systems to ingest and provide access. However only the libraries with the deepest pockets can handle High Definition, because of large file sizes and metadata issues, even though much of our film is now being shot in HD. The archives that are dealing with HD film are primarily the major studios.

Over the years we have created our own film taxonomies, although they include familiar fields: title, author, company/dist (if any), subject, format, length, duration, size of file, date of creation/modification, rights metadata (often the key way users search), technical metadata (compression, program used to create asset, audio, and etc.), descriptive metadata. We have kept fields discrete assuming we will migrate assets from system to system.

As with photos, we are having to alter how people think about processing and providing access to organizational content, as we work with Digital Asset Management systems. It is a challenge to transfer responsibility for description to users as they often create huge inconsistencies -- and yet there are not resources to catalog everything with library staff.

E-commerce has added new opportunities for special libraries and archives. It has created a push by many for-profit and some non-profit archives to invest in DAM systems to better manage their assets and allow for a quicker repurposing of their assets for commerce and increased demand.

Our particular challenge -- Organizing Internal Content

Special libraries see the scope of content management as much broader than content we buy or create. Our organizations have pockets of information in email, databases, on their hard drives, shared drives, USB sticks, cds in the form of spreadsheets, MS Word docs, pdfs -- all with inherent value, security, backup and other issues. We see the gap between discovery and delivery of content and managing inventory.

Special libraries are persuading their organizations to recognize the need for digital document management for contracts, business understandings, and intellectual property. To do this it requires creators of content to associate appropriate metadata so the content can be filed and found. This is a tough sell to our users because they associate managing records with administrative work that others should take care of. They dislike switching to a new strategy for managing content born digital, because they are used to their email storage folders.

Our next step is to persuade users to help manage the organizational legacy and other content. We advise our management that if they don't file their digital content in a managed space with metadata, their legacy may be lost. We explain to our photographers and filmmakers that without applying metadata to their content, it may not be found by those searching for their creative work.

Why Special Libraries are Particularly Sensitized to Change

Special libraries are not viewed by their management as an inherent good -- rather we are seen as big cost centers whether we work for profit or non profit institutions.

Like everyone we seem always to be competing for limited resources. We make our case over and over again to just sustain our current space, staff, and budget. Innovation and technology have enabled us to continue to improve and evolve our services and products.

We balance our concern to preserve unique materials (particularly the most vulnerable) with providing the best access to materials that are used the most (and therefore are the most valuable). Our primary role is not cataloging. In fact cataloging and collection maintenance are usually seen as work for interns or to be outsourced. To sustain print collections, special libraries expect to not only create finding aids but to enhance the value of the collections with new interpreted content to integrate the print and digital so they work seamlessly for our users.

Bottom line for LOC: Special Libraries need a flexible metadata and taxonomy standards that allow us to exercise bibliographic control for published and unpublished content. We need LOC and our consortiums to continue to collaborate with us to enhance shared cataloging and indexing records, while enabling us to utilize the expertise of our content creators.

References:

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