Taking Our Pulse
The OCLC Research Survey of Special Collections and Archives

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Coalition for Networked Information
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Overview

- Survey population
- Project objectives
- Data & action items
- Q&A
What’s wrong with this [big] picture?

- Overall *collections* size is growing
- *Use* is increasing
- Too many materials remain “hidden”
- *Backlogs* continue to grow
- *Staffing* is stable
- 75% of library *budgets* have been cut
Project objectives

1. Obtain *current data* to determine changes across the ARL libraries since 1998

2. *Expand* ARL’s survey population

3. Enable institutions to place themselves in the context of *norms*

4. Provide data to support *decision-making*

5. Recommend *actions* based on survey results
Survey population

Libraries surveyed: 275

Rate of response: 61% (169)

Five membership organizations
  • Association of Research Libraries
  • Canadian Association of Research Libraries
  • Independent Research Libraries Association
  • Oberlin Group
  • RLG Partnership
Respondents by type of institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percent of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent research libraries</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical societies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National institutions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental libraries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public libraries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortium</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Printed volumes in overall library

- More than 6 million: 14.7%
- 3–6 million: 22.1%
- 1–3 million: 26.4%
- Fewer than 1 million: 36.2%
Change in overall library funding

- Decreased 1-5%: 26%
- Decreased 6-10%: 24%
- Decreased 11-15%: 12%
- Decreased 16-20%: 5%
- Decreased more than 20%: 9%
- No change: 16%
- Increased: 9%
Key to percentages in figures:

Red = % of respondents
Black = numerical data
“Your three most challenging issues” **

1. Space: 64%

1. Born-digital materials: 37%

2. Digitization: 35%

** Funding and staffing were disallowed.
Respondents could name up to three challenges.
Top education and training needs

1. Born-digital materials: 83%

1. Information technology: 65%

2. Intellectual property: 56%

3. Cataloging and metadata: 51%
Assessment: Action item

Develop and promulgate metrics that enable standardized measurement of key elements of special collections use and management.
Collections: Growth

Mean ARL collections growth since 1998

- Books: 50%
- Archives/manuscripts: 50%
- Audio: 240%
- Visual and moving image: 300%
- Microforms: decreased 80%

Special collections in remote storage: 67%
Collections: Sample questions

Is dramatic growth of collections sustainable? If not, what should change?

Why are formal collaborative collection development partnerships still so rare?
Collections: Action items

Identify barriers that limit *collaborative collection development*. Define key characteristics and desired outcomes of effective collaboration.

Take collective action to share resources for cost-effective *preservation of at-risk audiovisual materials*. 
User services: Onsite visits

ARL
- Mean: 6,200
- Median: 3,100

CARL
- Mean: 4,900
- Median: 2,300

IRLA
- Mean: 8,300
- Median: 4,400

Oberlin
- Mean: 788
- Median: 731

RLG
- Mean: 7,500
- Median: 4,500
User services: Onsite visits

Percent of each type of user

- Faculty/staff: 9%
- Graduate students: 5%
- Undergraduates: 12%
- Visiting scholars/researchers: 24%
- Local community: 7%
- “Other”: 43%
Changes in level of use by type of user

Note: Numbers of respondents.
Changes in use by format

Note: Numbers of respondents.
Access to uncataloged/unprocessed materials

Note: Numbers of respondents.
Use of digital cameras

Users may employ personal digital cameras in the special collections reading room: 87%

Reasons to disallow digital camera use

- Copyright/Inappropriate use: 70%
- Potential loss of revenue: 41%
- Improper handling of materials: 63%
- Reading room disruption: 48%
- Existing reproduction services are sufficient: 59%
- Other: 48%

Note: n=27
Average charge for a digital scan

- More than $20, 15.9%
- $10.01-$20, 22.6%
- $5.01-$10, 20.1%
- $0-$5, 28.7%
- We do not offer this service, 1.2%
- We provide scans at no charge, 11.6%
Web-based communication methods

[Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents using various web-based communication methods]

- Flickr: 19% using now, 32% no current plans, 55% will implement within a year
- YouTube: 10% using now, 30% no current plans, 63% will implement within a year
- Podcasting: 6% using now, 24% no current plans, 63% will implement within a year
- Wikipedia links: 37% using now, 10% no current plans, 50% will implement within a year
- Institutional wiki: 6% using now, 17% no current plans, 70% will implement within a year
- Mobile apps: 10% using now, 10% no current plans, 72% will implement within a year
- User-contributed feedback: 16% using now, 15% no current plans, 61% will implement within a year
- Social networking presence: 39% using now, 6% no current plans, 62% will implement within a year
User services: Sample question

Does the level of use of special collections justify the resources being expended?
User services: Action items

Develop and liberally implement exemplary policies to *facilitate* rather than inhibit *access* to and *interlibrary loan* of rare and unique materials.
Cataloging and metadata

Online catalog records

- Books: 85%
- Maps: 42%
- Archival formats: 50% or less

ARLs show minimal improvement in “exposing hidden collections”
Change in size of backlogs

Note: Numbers of respondents.
Cataloging & metadata: Sample questions

Why are so many backlogs continuing to increase?

Why hasn’t the emphasis on sustainable metadata methodologies had more payoff?
Cataloging and metadata: Action items

Compile, disseminate, and adopt a slate of *replicable, sustainable methodologies* for cataloging and processing to facilitate exposure of materials that remain hidden and *stop the growth of backlogs*.

Develop *shared capacities to create metadata* for published materials such as maps and printed graphics for which cataloging resources appear to be scarce.
Archival management

Archival finding aids

• Online: 44%
• Print-only or in local silos: 30%

Simplified processing techniques

• Always: 18%
• Sometimes: 57%
Encoding of archival finding aids

Note: Respondents could check all that apply. Percent of respondents, not finding aids.
Archival management

Finding aids tools are not standardized
- Most commonly used: word processing, databases
- Archivists Toolkit: 34%
- Archon: 11%
- ArchivesSpace tentatively forthcoming (AT + Archon)

Institutional archives
- Reports to library: 87%
- Responsible for records management: 70%
Archival management: Action item

*Convert legacy finding aids* using affordable methodologies to enable Internet access.

Resist the urge to upgrade or expand the data.

Develop tools to facilitate conversion from local databases.
Digitization

Note: Respondents could check all that apply.
Special collections involvement in digitization projects

- Project management: 87%
- Selection of materials: 99%
- Cataloging/metadata: 84%
- Digital image production: 71%
Definition: Systematic reproduction of entire collections using streamlined production methods that account for special needs.
Licensed content

Content licensed to commercial firms for digitization: 26%

C.f. Principles to Guide Vendor/Publisher Relations in Large-Scale Digitization Projects of Special Collections Materials. ARL policy, approved July 2010.

Digitization: Sample questions

What constitutes an effective large-scale digitization project?

Can we collaborate to complete the corpus of digitized rare books?
Digitization: Action items

Develop models for *large-scale digitization* of special collections, including methodologies for selection of appropriate collections, security, safe handling, sustainable metadata creation, and ambitious productivity levels.

Determine the scope of the existing corpus of *digitized rare books*, differentiating those available as open access from those that are licensed. Identify the most important gaps and implement collaborative projects to complete the corpus.
Born-digital archival materials

In a nutshell ...

- Undercollected
- Undercounted
- Undermanaged
- Unpreserved
- Inaccessible
Born-digital archival materials

- Holdings reported by: 35%
  - Mean gigabytes: 1500 GB
  - Median gigabytes: 90 GB
  - Percent held by top two libraries: 51%
  - Percent held by top 13 libraries: 93%

- Digital materials currently held by: 79%

- Assignment of responsibility for born-digital management: 44%

- Education/training needed by: 83%

- We surmise that collecting is generally passive, sporadic, limited.
Responsibility for born-digital archival materials

- Special collections/archives: 13%
- Library-wide level: 17%
- Institutional level: 3%
- Decentralized: 11%
- Not formally determined: 27%
- Not yet addressed: 18%
Impediments to born-digital management

Note: Respondents could check all that apply.
Born-digital materials already held

- Institutional archival records: 46%
- Other archives and manuscripts: 44%
- Publications and reports: 36%
- Serials: 15%
- Photographs: 55%
- Web sites: 27%
- Audio: 47%
- Video: 45%
- Data sets: 11%
- None: 21%
Born-digital materials: Sample questions

What would best help us **jump-start** progress on managing **born-digital** archival materials?

Born-digital materials: Action items

Define the characteristics of born-digital materials that warrant *management as “special collections.”*

Define a reasonable set of *basic steps* for initiating an institutional program for responsibly managing born-digital archival materials.

Develop *use cases and cost models* for selection, management, and preservation of born-digital archival materials.
Changes in staffing levels

Note: Numbers of respondents.
Education and training needs

- Cataloging and metadata: 83%
- Copyright and intellectual property: 56%
- Teaching: 39%
- Outreach: 39%
- Records management: 21%
- Archival processing: 28%
- Foreign languages: 28%
- Fundraising: 24%
- Collection development: 24%
- History of the book: 20%
- Born-digital records: 35%
Staffing: Action items

Confirm high-priority areas in which education and training opportunities are not adequate for particular segments of the professional community. Exert pressure on appropriate organizations to fill the gaps.
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