

Everything We See Hides Another: Coping with Hidden Collections in the 21st Century Library

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Everything We See Hides Another: Coping with Hidden Collections in the 21st Century Library

Mark Dimunation, Chief, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress

I am very pleased to be here for this massive crowd. No need to give you my background, other than to say that it is fitting that my biography found in the program is ten years old, because the talk I am giving today is a consideration of the last decade of our work with hidden collections. The presence of an outdated biography is entirely my fault. When asked to supply one, I suggested to the organizers that they use the Library of Congress biography found online. The bad news, apparently, is that the institution I work for thinks I haven't done anything in the last ten years! So, my apologies to the current Chair of the Rare Book and Manuscript Section at ALA; I was once that—ten years ago!

When the organizers of this conference asked me to speak on Hidden Collections, I initially thought I would take the tack of looking at what has been revealed over the last few years and ponder the meaning it carries for developing special collections and scholarship. Hence the original reference to Rene Magritte's explanation as to why he painted the world as he imagined it: *"Everything we see hides another thing, we always want to see what is hidden by what we see."* For, it struck me that the powerful impact of pulling the curtain back on collections previously hidden is that the results sparked a desire to see even more. And with this exciting work coinciding with the current scholarly trend toward examining material culture and non-traditional sources, it clearly signaled that another strong bridge was being built between special collections and archives and the research community.

And indeed, much exciting and innovative work has been accomplished of late, easily witnessed in the projects supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources' (CLIR) with their Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program, funded by the Mellon Foundation. Projects from all stripes of institutions have

processed and documented extraordinary holdings such as: Islamic manuscripts at the University of Michigan, the Moravian community as documented at Lehigh University, the Newberry's French pamphlet collection, the field books and expedition journals at the Smithsonian, the Mexican American Labor collections at Arizona State, and the Litchfield Historical Society's Revolutionary era collections.

Hidden collections have served as the locus for collaboration within and amongst institutions: PASCL, the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries, launched a highly successful collaborative consortial project for processing and cataloging; three individual proposals to process collections documenting the civil rights and voter education movements in the US were guided into merging together into one large collaborative project so that Emory University, the Woodruff Library, and Tulane's Amistad Research Center received a single substantial grant for their efforts; Yale and Stanford joined forces to consider their collections on Song, Speech and Dance as held in their recorded sound archives; and 150 Chicago-area collections banded together as the Black Metropolis Research Consortium to address their unprocessed and inaccessible collections documenting the political, cultural, social, spiritual, and economic aspects of African American's lives throughout the history of Chicago.

Given the setting, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the College of Charleston's two successful projects: the Avery Research Center's successful program for providing access to their African American Collections and the project at the Jewish Heritage Collection to make the holdings of the William A Rosenthal Judaica Collection accessible. There is a long list of such ventures; some will stand as triumphs of innovation in processing, cataloging techniques, and the implementation of technology. There is much we can learn from what has already been achieved. But as I perused

the proposals and the lists of projects carried out over the past decade, I began to place these accomplishments in the context of what had originally launched our discussions about Hidden Collections. I have been swimming in the waters of these discussions for over ten years now – as an original member of the ARL Special Collections Task Force, as the host of the 2003 LC Hidden Collections Conference and as a member of the CLIR Board of Directors, and while I am optimistic that our efforts over the years have yielded positive results, I fear that we have been pushed off course and have derailed the initial impetus toward a holistic, national rethinking of how we process and make accessible our collections for our constituencies.

In looking back, I see four detours along the path that will ultimately alter the nature of our proposed destination:

One: In our efforts to solve the hidden collections problem we have veered toward a project based solution. This has not only contained the actual projects to the local level (albeit usually with national access to some kind of metadata), but more important it has also pegged hidden collections as a finite problem to be fixed rather than as an aspect of a larger ongoing collection phenomena that needs to be incorporated into our routine approach to our holdings.

Two: This is occurring in an environment in which the nature and presentation of descriptive data is transforming quickly and regularly. In the process we continue to see—and often times accept—the erosion of legacy data.

Three: We plan and operate in an atmosphere in which the left hand often does not know what the right is doing, so we repeat the task again and again of forcing descriptive records and data into a system that was designed to address other issues.

Four: We are operating as if we are still in new territory when in fact we have a vast resource of models and metrics to guide our decisions and apply our solutions to library-wide problems.

This is not an indictment. We have not failed. And certainly we live a world far different from the one we had planned on ten years ago. Actually, reflecting on the past reminds me of the story of Oscar Wilde’s visit to Charleston. He was staying along the Battery in one of the grand houses. When he was being given a tour of the Battery at sunset, he turned to his host and said, “Sir, you have a glorious sunset here in Charleston.” The response was pure and simple: “Sir, you should’ve seen it before the war.” So, while our economic situation in fact may be real, there is a touch of “you should’ve seen what we could’ve done before the war.”

But in our optimistic rush at the problem, we may have placed objectives in front of us so as to obscure a larger view of the issue. It gives new meaning to Magritte’s fanciful notion. “*Everything we see hides another thing*” it now takes on a different meaning here.

The discussion of Hidden Collections can be traced back, in part, to an Association of Research Libraries (ARL) survey of special collections conducted in 1998. It provided us at the time with a substantial snapshot of 99 ARL libraries regarding special collections access, use, preservation, organizational structure, budgets, and beyond. When Judith Panitch’s summary of the results was released in 2000, the unprecedented view was enough to prompt a symposium entitled “Building on Strength: Developing an ARL Agenda for Special Collections,” held at Brown University in June of 2001. David Stam set the tone with his keynote “So What’s so Special.” “Our special collections must be democratized,” he demanded “they must overcome their exclusionary origins..., must shed their image of aloofness..., must get their precious treasures and scholarly ephemera into the sometimes dirty hands of potential users, must place a higher priority on access to unprocessed material, and must build a wider audience including the traditional scholar..., the innovator in new uses of old stuff, and most importantly for survival, the inquiring student.” Stam reviewed the ARL survey and challenged curators and administrators alike to radically alter the nature and approach to special collections. But with a single sentence, he launched a decade-long focus on hidden

collections: “Make access happen—the amount of unprocessed material, much of it unique, documented in the survey is reprehensible.”

ARL 2003 Conference

In response to the discussions that unfolded during the Brown Special Collections Symposium, ARL formed a Special Collections Task Force made up of Special Collections Librarians, Archivists, and Library Directors. The charge was to advance the agenda that had emerged at Brown and to identify and address issues of shared concern. A Statement of Commitment was issued by the ARL Board, and the Task Force set out to make concrete the issues that had spilled out at the initial symposium. There were key concerns, of course, regarding communication, funding, preservation, space, and access. The Task Force addressed (and still is addressing) in various fashions the Core Competencies of Special Collections Librarians, the issues of preservation, the “19th century problem,” and the issue of born-digital materials, among other concerns. But at the front stood the vexing problem of cataloging backlogs and unprocessed collections.

The Task Force responded with a committee, headed by Barbara M Jones (then of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign before moving on to Wesleyan and then to ALA’s Office of Intellectual Freedom), which produced a White Paper in June 2003. The final product—“Hidden Collections, Scholarly Barriers: Creating Access to Unprocessed Special Collections Materials in North America’s Research Libraries”—has shaped the discussion of Hidden Collections ever since. Indeed, many of the solutions we have launched in the past decade point directly to the suggestions fomented by the ARL White Paper.

The landscape was bleak in 2003. The summary quite correctly detailed that un-cataloged or unprocessed collections are vulnerable to theft and are inaccessible to the community of scholars for whom they are acquired. By their very nature, hidden collections are staff dependent, excluded from library-wide preservation, retrospective conversion, and digitization efforts. Their status results in duplication, loss, and theft. This, when

combined with the perceived “exceptional” nature of Special Collections materials, has led to a failure to protect and promote these scholarly resources.

With a manifesto in hand, the inevitable next step for the Task Force was to sponsor a major summit of concerned librarians at the Library of Congress. When the LC conference “Exposing Hidden Collections” opened in September 2003, the sum of what we understood and shared about the topic was characterized initially as a tower of Babel.

- We don’t know how to go about doing what we need to do.
- We don’t know how to go about doing what we need to do with the options that are available to us.
- We don’t know what others are doing.
- We don’t know if others know what we are doing.
- We don’t know how to pay for what we are doing.

After two days of discussion and breakout sessions, I was tapped to summarize the outcomes and point to the core concepts that had emerged from the process. First and foremost, we had learned that to tackle Hidden Collections we must think globally and act locally. The task ahead, we concluded, was to develop a national, organized effort to address the challenge of arrears. The objectives we laid out are instructive here, because they make clear that we continue to tread this familiar ground these many years later. What was laid out at the conference set the course of action for the coming years—it also narrowed our focus to limited objectives. A concerted effort to tackle hidden collections required that we:

1. Make The Situation Transparent.

We must make efforts to know what we have and report it to others, and to do this in an organized fashion—inventory and report. It also became evident that we needed to address at a local level the tension between acquisition and processing, and from this establish priorities and then “Commit and Allocate.”

2. Build, Assess and Report Viable Models.

It seemed imperative that we establish best practices and benchmarks for various processing solutions, for options in terms of utilizing various codes and utilities; for pricing the cost of inventory, appraisal, and processing; for training and staff utilization; and for cooperative efforts and consortia.

3. Standards

As we learned in 2003, we did not need to invent yet another core standard. We needed to vet the various options available and cull from that what conference attendees were calling a “core-core,” a standard that can address the wide varieties of materials and needs. We encouraged the development of a registry of cataloging standards, utilities and techniques, to distill the core and to recommend useful applications. Description should be seen as a continuum, beginning with the accession level record, establish standards for it and build on it. Core principles embodied in existing standards, we suggested, could inform implementation of new access methods. Achieve technical standards that are simplified, that allow traffic at a high level of integrated access, the ability to harvest without mutation, and permit collective disclosure. And most important—perhaps the rallying cry of the 2003 conference was: “Explore the collection level record. Embrace it, woo it. Be one with the collection level record!!”

4. Cooperation and Inter-Institutional Collaboration

It was evident that greater success could be achieved through cooperative ventures—to share funding, share projects, and share commitment to themes and subject matter. Considerable confidence was placed in the idea of promoting a national backlog project where retrospective conversion approaches could be blended with arrearage reduction—by subject, by region, by format. Such collaboration should extend to institutions beyond the library—heritage institutions, the book trade, the academy. Develop ways to leverage digitization to aid in arrearage reduction.

5. Funding

The message here was simple, if not entirely realistic: Reallocate. Commit.

The Fall 2004 issue of *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts and Cultural Heritage*, the scholarly publication of the Rare Book and Manuscript Section of ALA, was devoted entirely to Hidden Collections, prompted by the release of the ARL White Paper on Hidden Collections and featured now familiar voices in the discussion: Barbara M. Jones, Judith M. Panitch, Carol Mandel, Stanley N. Katz, and Winston Tabb. The agenda was set, but this was an ambitious program that we were attempting to kick-start. Several member institutions launched cooperative projects, the cataloging community continued their discussion of Dublin core and other streamlined approaches, a national registry of hidden collections was attempted, and the discussion continued. But the original notion that we needed to launch a head-on approach to arrearages and unprocessed materials quickly slid into an as-needed project model. And this would continue until the issue received additional momentum through a CLIR sponsored proposal.

Most recently, Hidden Collections have been targeted by a Mellon sponsored initiative administered by CLIR. The original concept and proposal for the four-year Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program was submitted by CLIR in 2008, with a projected budget of \$4 million a year, which has turned out to be accurate. The Program is now awaiting news on a proposal for renewal for a fifth and final granting year. True to the CLIR mission, the Program focuses on materials that are of wide-scholarly interest; the judging criteria are decisive in this emphasis. The Program is looking for applications that address collections of high scholarly value; that offer innovative and efficient solutions or models; and that incorporate interaction with scholars, especially emerging scholars.

The program has drawn a wide response. In the last year over 100 applications were submitted, with 17 receiving funding. Despite the requirement that the budget had to come in at \$75,000 or higher, the 47 awards administered over the whole of the Program cover all variety of institutions—universities, colleges, museums, archives, and historical societies. And I believe you had that sense from some of the grantees I mentioned earlier on. The onset of the CLIR program was fortui-

tously timed with the release of the OCLC report: “Taking Our Pulse: The OCLC Research Survey of Special Collections and Archives” by Jackie M. Dooley and Katherine Luce.

OCLC took up the mantle a decade after the ARL survey. The scope was expanded to include ARL libraries, Canadian institutions, IRLA, the Oberlin Group, and the RLG partnership. Of the 275 requests sent out, OCLC received 169 responses.

So how do we stand today? The OCLC Research report indicates that much rare and unique material remains undiscoverable, and that while monetary resources are shrinking, user demand is growing. The indicators are familiar to us all:

- The size of ARL collections has grown dramatically, up to 300% for some formats.
- Use of all types of material has increased across the board.
- Half of archival collections have no online presence.
- While many backlogs have decreased, almost as many continue to grow.
- User demand for digitized collections remains insatiable.
- Management of born-digital archival materials is still in its infancy.
- Staffing is generally stable, but has grown for digital services.
- Seventy-five percent of general library budgets have been reduced.
- The current tough economy renders “business as usual” impossible.

As is often the case with this topic, there is good news and there is bad news. As Dooley and Luce succinctly summarize: “The question that looms the largest for many readers of this report may be: To what extent have we succeeded in ‘exposing hidden collections’ in the decade since ARL’s benchmark survey in 1998? The short answer: far from enough. Some progress has been made, but vast quantities of special collections material are not yet discoverable online.” This brings us to the detours alluded to earlier:

1. Taking a Project approach to a System Problem

For all of the discussions devoted to the need for a national effort to be undertaken to coordinate our efforts to address hidden collections, the vast majority of the responses have remained local and project oriented, perpetuating the “separation of communities of practice” assailed by the Working Group in their discussion of cataloging.

It is true that the CLIR program attempts to address some of these issues. Emphasis on a successful registry of collections seems promising, as does the awareness that a national program requires a cyberinfrastructure that is extensible, layered, and sustainable. The Mellon program pushes us in the right direction of a national vision for local action—it is a three-layered vision that builds a hidden collections and archives registry that is available through a web-based platform, it seeks federated searching across cataloged collections, and it envisions an enhanced federated environment with digital surrogates and representations.

If the CLIR model can emerge as successful, we must signal a major change in our approach to hidden collections. We need to move away from a model that fashions special approaches for special materials and instead alter our entire approach to processing so that these materials become part of the overall workflow. This means establishing system-wide workflows and processes that are sustainable and scalable. The same view could be focused on digitization as a means of “unhiding” collections, but this too requires a press to move away from boutique style presentations to a larger scale that employs major discovery systems.

Now is the time perhaps to seriously consider digitization prior to description. There are strong indications that the nature of materials that will be entering the research libraries in years to come will increasingly fall outside the norms of format and description—born digital collections, material culture collections, and new media formats and technologies. They will remain problematic for us if we persist in separating them from the whole of the library’s collection. In essence, we need to recognize that we have defined many of these collections as outside standard procedure and

have therefore problematized them. We have reached a moment when we need to own the problem and the solution.

2. The erosion factor

In an ideal setting, cataloging data should serve as a strong conduit, connecting researchers to materials, as well as functioning as an important component in deterring theft, or at least demonstrating ownership after the fact. But for many of us, the world of our catalog, with myriad practices and generations of shifting wisdom, is less than perfect. It is rare indeed to find a catalog that is consistently expressed through a singular descriptive approach. More typical is the multilayered catalog, with records ranging from brief handwritten entries in catalogers' hand to typed local records to LC printed cards with typed local annotations to the modern day online record in all of its manifestations. The questions here are "can a researcher locate what we offer?" or "could we prove ownership of a purloined item with this catalog record?" And sadly, in many cases, they cannot and we could not.

The problems posed by legacy catalog records are as varied as the libraries that continue to rely on them. Old LC printed cards often lack local annotation and copy-specific information. The automated records derived from them were often times created using a limited profile of transferable information – often dropping unique characteristics and eliminating special files. Copy cataloging protocols for machine readable records often eschewed local information in favor of generic records. Today, with our modern push to make materials accessible and transparent to researchers regardless of the level of processing, materials are being delivered to the reading room with only the barest of information recorded in the acquisition record. Catalogers come, catalogers go, and it's an ever-changing point of view. Inconsistent practices can mean that copy descriptive information may or may not be recorded. Let's take a look at an example from my own shop. I will add up front that this is an older example; it does not reflect the work or the practices of the current Rare Book Cataloging team at LC, and the information that is addressed may seem to overlay the preciousness of special collections

materials. But, nevertheless, this is the story of a lone catalog record and the catalog as we have inherited it, which in itself is part of the problem we are addressing today.

The Rare Book and Special Collections Division holds three copies of James Thomson's *The Seasons* (London, 1811). The LC printed Card indicates the original cataloging was done in 1946. Handwritten notes on the shelflist card indicate a second copy was also added in 1946. A third copy—a gift—was recorded on the card in 1959. An arrow drawn from the handwritten donor name to a note suggests that the gift copy has a fore-edge painting. The catalog information was later converted into an electronic record in what is known as our Pre-Marc file. In this transfer we seem to have lost two of our copies, the donor information, and any mention of the fore-edge painting. In truth, we do indeed hold three copies—one large paper and two trimmed copies. Not one, but two of the copies have fore-edge paintings. Look—no matter how any of us come down on the importance of fore-edge paintings, I just consider myself lucky that the national database doesn't show us as holding only the microfilm! As an authoritative and accurate reflection of our holdings, our old catalog information is utterly insufficient. And, because we cannot possibly review the accuracy of the catalog records for 800,000 volumes, we can correct these errors only on an as-discovered basis. So, it is a mixed bag; our catalog is far from precise. Even our cataloged records have become hidden as library practice and researcher strategies move further and further away from the format by which we offer traditional bibliographic description.

This is what I refer to as the erosion factor. With each embrace of new technology, with each revision of standards and practice, and with each successive wave of innovation, a bit more of our legacy data is washed away. Special Collections, archival materials, and non-book formats were often times set to the side as exceptions when large-scale conversions of bibliographic records were undertaken. The echoes of the promise to return to that data grow increasingly faint as our energies and attention are drawn elsewhere. And while this is understandable in some fields where

current publications are at a premium, it is a poor model for coping with research level collections. Before we get too far into trumpeting the 21st century, it might behoove us to at least complete the work of the 20th century. Of course I am not suggesting here the unrealistic plan of a level 3 retrospective conversion of all outstanding Special Collections records—we have neither the money nor, frankly at this point, the capacity for that process. But I would like us to look at techniques that at least bring the data forward so that all boats can rise with the tide. The failure to do so is a gross disservice to our constituencies and will ultimately undermine our efforts to advance our delivery of information to the modern user. This is not something that can be addressed at a project-by-project approach. It will require an all-out effort to bring it forward.

So, the question comes down to this. Is it a choice between robust cataloging and minimal level cataloging? Does it matter, does it help. Are there alternatives? Frankly, it seems to me to be a matter of choice. There are few institutions that have approached their cataloging profile in a comprehensive fashion. Most of us have not treated ephemera, playbills, and corporate archives with the same degree of intensity as we have incunables, first editions, and literary papers. Our choice of the level of cataloging reflects an assessment of the importance of the materials. And with this choice, we have the ability to channel our resources to those materials we deem most vital to our collections.

Certainly this is being addressed in the Special Collections and Archival communities. Those who attended the discussion session on Progressive Bibliography at the RBMS Preconference or who have read James Ascher's accomplished article "Progressing Toward Bibliography, or, Organic Growth in the Bibliographic Record," in *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage*, (Fall, 2009) will be familiar with what has been described as the "touch-it-once" mentality of traditional cataloging. Operating here is the old notion of cataloging, steeped in descriptive bibliography and the traditions of scholarly bibliographic studies. Once properly described, a book and its record are

forever fused; additional intervention is called for only under specific circumstances.

Ascher goes on to describe the degressive principle in cataloging—the notion that less important material gets less description. This approach, of course, has recently been reinforced by the "Report on the Future of Bibliographic Control" released by the Working Group at the Library of Congress, which suggested that we allow for different catalog levels depending on the types of documents, their nature and richness. And certainly the embrace of Meisner–Green, or MPLP, reflects a similar sensibility. What remains to be seen, however, is how this approach will take shape in various Special Collections and Archival settings and how it will then inform our approach to library materials across the board. Size, value, and application will all weigh in as factors as we began to reexamine the nature and use of our catalog records.

3. Left hand / right hand problem

Currently at the Library of Congress a new search interface is in beta testing. This will be a single search approach to all of the digital collections and all of the electronic data in the Library. An online catalog search will now bring up all cataloging metadata, images, whole word search results, films, electronic texts, digitized books, and a vast array of materials and information with a single search request. The underlying notion is that content and use-based queries are looking for the full spectrum of format and information. It will fundamentally alter our understanding of our collections, and it will change the architecture and the vocabulary needed to describe our holdings. It gives rise to a vastly more dynamic view of how we catalog and describe our materials—and nowhere will this be received with greater enthusiasm than in the present discussion of how to describe our collections, to identify them, protect them, and make them accessible.

But while this testing is going on, there are other issues being addressed by other parties, and we often find ourselves moving in parallel lines, never intersecting. The Rare Book and Special Collections Division at LC, for example, has begun to consider new approaches to progressive catalog-

ing. Here we view the record as malleable, evolving, growing, and responding to further insight, new technology, and shifting scholarly approaches. This has led me to begin to view our catalog records as hubs, around which a wide array of information, links, and images might be connected as by spokes. This is a question of accumulation rather than description – where information and metadata is amassed, linked or hung on a core record rather than being digested, edited, and transcribed into the set vocabulary of a standing catalog record.

In essence, it is a prescription for developing a new approach to the catalog record. If we move away from the catalog record as the strict central repository for all pertinent information regarding a specific copy, we can move toward a more relaxed and fulsome approach to hanging data on the core record. This can take the form of added links to the digitized file of the book, full text transcriptions, scanned dealer descriptions, links to additional references and bibliographic studies, scans and photographs of unique characteristics—signatures, text, bookplates, distinctive binding features, and exhibition history. At LC we are also investigating the possibility of linking hyperspectral images of select documents to the catalog record—images that reveal unique characteristics of an item—a fingerprint if you will—as well as watermarks, palimpsest and the like. In essence, we can build a virtual vertical file that can grow and respond as additional information and relationships emerge regarding a specific book. And better yet, we do not need to convert to a whole new system to accomplish this; we simply need to build the means to relate information to our catalog record.

But the question remains: Can the new proposed system accommodate the variety of plans and visions floating throughout the institution.

4. Metrics and models

As the OCLC report confirmed, the lack of a systematic statistical overview of the work of special collections hinders our ability to assess and analyze the issues that impact operations library-wide: “A lack of established metrics limits collecting, analyzing, and comparing statistics across the

special collections community. Norms for tracking and assessing user services, metadata creation, archival processing, digital production, and other activities are necessary for measuring institutions against community norms and for demonstrating locally that primary constituencies are being well served. There remains a need to develop and promulgate *metrics* that enable standardized measurement of key aspects of special collections use and management.” That is all easily said, but at the recent ARL Special Collections Task Force meeting, the question of which metrics to embrace prompted a symphony of “yes’s” “but’s” and “maybe’s,” so we face an interesting problem.

While we have indeed made progress over the past decade, it has come about in a sporadic and haphazard fashion. “The extent to which materials now appear in online catalogs varies widely by format: 85% of printed volumes, 50% of archival materials, 42% of maps, and 25% of visual materials are accessible online. And yet, relative to ARL’s 1998 data, only 12% more printed volumes have an online record—that is, we have added 1% per year—as do 15% more archival materials and 6% more maps.

So, our sense that we have made progress might be deceiving. The ARL libraries responding to the OCLC survey show minimal improvement in exposing hidden collections. Although 59% indicate that their book backlogs have decreased, another 25% report an increase. Of the archival respondents, only 57% report that they sometimes use simplified processing techniques. Archival finding aids are still largely inaccessible, with only 44% available online. And when the discussion turns to born digital materials, the response is bleak: “In a nutshell, Undercollected, Undercounted, Undermanaged, Unpreserved, and Inaccessible.”

This limited progress may be attributable in part to lack of sustainable, widely replicable methodologies to improve efficiencies, and certainly one would call for more usable models in the near future. It is in response to this issue that the recent CLIR proposal to Mellon is most promising, for it proposes to do a five year study of the various approaches and models sponsored by the grant. It hopes to examine whether technologies

are affecting the ways in which librarians, archivists and scholars are thinking about their work. It will also consider what factors—such as type of institution, technologies, formats, staffing models, and staff experience—seem to correlate to the success of the projects. It is work that is much needed and important.

So, how do we go about solving all of this? I wish I could tell you. It is likely that we will see more useful models and practices emerge in the next year or so—and I am sure that we will also see the inevitable conference taking stock of where we stand on this issue. I hope that the solutions we employ will move beyond the reserve of special collections and archives and that we will develop systems and approaches that embrace the whole of our collections and the needs of our users. It is important, ten years in, that we keep our vision clear, that we look across the entire landscape of our operations, and that we apply what we have learned while grappling with hidden collections—this will insure that we will indeed see beyond what is hidden.