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Media Centered--Charleston Bound!

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The use of media in the classroom is ubiquitous. Visual theses are on the rise. Academic interest in and classroom use of film and global cinema is growing at an exponential rate. Resultantly, the importance of a rich and varied media resources collection is essential to academic institutions, public libraries, and K-12 media centers. It takes a lot of work, development, and research to maintain and grow a collection like this. Resources that aid in this process are invaluable…

I don’t know about you, but I’m super excited to be attending… My. First. Charleston. Conference. Ever.

For years now, the National Media Market has either coincided with or ended right before the Charleston Conference, making it impossible for me to attend both. Actually, the Media Market is how I first came to write for Against the Grain. At any rate, there is just enough of a break in between this year (four days to be exact) for me to manage it.

Before we go any further, there is one thing I need to be clear about through — I’ve been to Charleston numerous times, having immediately fallen for the city on my first trip over the Cooper river via the Grace bridge (the one before the Arthur Ravenel, Jr. one now) on a middle-school field trip many, many years ago. So, while I’m pleased to be heading back to Chucktown, I really am focused on the prospect of engaging in the conference.

Taking Stock

Diving right in with the vendor showcase and a few meetings the first day, it looks like the pace will quickly pick up with plenary sessions and many, many concurrent and lunch sessions to choose from for the duration.

In addition to attending, I’m also presenting with two crackerjack cinéastes from Duke and Hofstra. We’ve set to discuss media collection strategies in academic libraries — specifically addressing the range of approaches we take based on our individual institution’s mission, budget, technical infrastructure and FTE — y’all come.

Reviewing the line-up of speakers and topics for the concurrent sessions, it seems I will be hustling from one to another and hard pressed to choose only one per time-slot. True to form, almost all of the sessions I am focused on deal directly with media:

- Librarians, Publishers, and Aggregators — the New Collaborators
- The Whole Discovery Enchilada: How close are we to the goal?
- Apples to oranges: comparing streaming video platforms
- The Road Ahead? Patron-Driven Acquisition Might Become...
- Moving beyond COUNTER: assessing user engagement with streaming video
- Of Pigs and Pythons: Ingesting and Digesting a Major Media Collection
- Applying Entrepreneurship in a Changing Higher Education Landscape: Case Studies Involving Streaming Video

One of the things that strikes me in reading all of the session descriptions is how much overlap there is between “media-centric” ones and sessions on eBooks and journals — but, more on that later. For now, let’s unpack the list and why my hopes for each of these sessions are large.

Digging In

Librarians, Publishers, and Aggregators — The New Collaborators

Why it’s important: They’re presenting on a collaboration between librarians and publishers that covers multi-format content.

What I hope to hear: Specific details about the development of their unique content sets; the rubric they’ve assigned to make these collections easily discoverable; examples of how this material resonates in research; associated copyright

Possible questions: What are the specifics on “licensing fragments of content”?

The Whole Discovery Enchilada: How Close Are We to the Goal?

Why it’s important: Content discoverability is simply, undoubtably key.

What I hope to hear: Where folks are on making subscribed online content readily and reliably discoverable via library Websites; more on ensuring against bias in discovery; how usage stats are compiled and how they are assigned (who gets them); if there is a standard, what is it based upon; formula for adding metadata; what the average workflow and turnaround is on this; audience feedback; overview of workflow in total

Possible questions: What are the next steps for publishers and discovery services? How do you see metadata, collaborative policies and workflow changing, moving forward?

Apples to Oranges: Comparing Streaming Video Platforms

Why it’s important: It’s a conversation on streaming video. These conversations remain crucial, specifically ones that effectively offer multiple perspectives.

What I hope to hear: Overview of recent activity and if/how their models or approaches to curating streaming media have changed in the last couple of years; specifics on how they use any metrics provided by the vendor/platform and if they feel the info provided is useful; their experience/narrative on how they see these platforms and associated content resonate in the curriculum

Potential questions: What’s the noticeable impact on instruction; examples of resonance and ROI in instruction and research; what they’d like to see next?

The Road Ahead? Patron-Driven Acquisition Might Become...

Why it’s important: It’s a conversation about delivery and pricing models of multi-form content with perspectives from a publisher and an academic librarian.

What I hope to hear: Specifies on content providers and libraries engaging in negotiated agreements on item subscription charges as well as triggers to purchase; some discussion on flexibility; room for fluidity in responsive PDA; what a proposed model looks like; audience interaction on this

Potential questions: What’s the vision on sustainability (budget-wise and workflow) of this, the impact on local curation, and the impact on existing models?

Moving Beyond COUNTER: Assessing User Engagement with Streaming Video

Why it’s important: It’s a conversation on impact of streaming video and capture of user engagement.

What I hope to hear: Data strategies in general. In-depth specifics on how engagement is assessed and measured; what constitutes page visits, plays, etc.; numbers/percentages on various paths to engagement (how folks found the product); how/if return or regular users can be identified; discussion on forecasting; audience interaction on this

Potential Questions: What’s the deal on assigning user type? What are the opportunities for surveys? What about requests or concern for standards (assigned and reassigned)?

Of Pigs and Pythons: Ingesting and Digesting a Major Media Collection

Why it’s important: Compelling sizeable venture

What I hope to hear: The history behind the collection; how they got it; how it’s being used and by whom; what workflows they put into place; what additional staff power and funding accompanied the collection

Potential questions: I’ll have many.
Applying Entrepreneurship in a Changing Higher Education Landscape: Case Studies Involving Streaming Video

Why it’s important: Academic case studies on curricular engagement leveraging video consumption and production with one alongside an entrepreneurial approach.

What I hope to hear: Impact and resonance on the curriculum; presence of digital literacy instruction; partnerships with faculty in general; audience feedback on similar engagement occurring on their campuses.

Potential questions: Mainly production questions regarding the entrepreneur series — how much student input and production experience? And what’s the reception on campus and across communities, etc.?

And, finally — Our session:

Current Collection Development Strategies for Video

Why it’s important: It’s a conversation on media collection strategies from multiple perspectives and an opportunity to engage with many colleagues in the audience on this.

What I hope to convey: Strategies that have proven effective so far; areas where growth and reframing might be needed; digging in on similarities, differences, concerns and where we’re all going; shifts in focus; new areas of growth; their experiences.

Food For Thought

Whew! The potential for fruitful discussion and contemplation is pretty rich, here. And, as I mentioned earlier, all of the concurrent sessions I’m focusing on strike a personal chord with me in that they’re mostly related to media. But, they all also ultimately speak to the necessity for good content that can be easily and quickly discovered while being served up seamlessly (and increasingly online) to our patrons. Pretty much a workflow or pathway that reflects the efforts of a slew of people working in different capacities within and external to the library. This is the lure of Charleston for me in a nutshell — the opportunity to engage on these “media-centric” topics that are so important to me and the work that I do at the Media Center at UNC — with folks who work beyond media and specialize in other areas like metadata, licensing, content development, and more. Multiple perspectives are essential.

The conference schedule seems to be geared toward effectively leveraging multiple perspectives and I imagine the plenary and Neapolitan sessions will complement a lot of the discussion I’ve outlined above. Research, budgeting, open access and copyright remain staple topics and I’m looking forward to hearing more from other organizations and how these shake out among their priorities.

It is easy to stay hyper focused on local concerns amid the daily rhythm of my work — collections building, literacy instruction, public service — and I prize the opportunity to step away, clear my head, and hear from others.