

**Art Libraries Society of North America, 33rd Annual Conference
Hilton Americas, Houston, Texas, April 1-6, 2005**

**Session 19: When Couture Costs Less Than Ready-to-Wear: Non-Commercial
Content Creation and Resource Sharing**

Tuesday, April 5, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 PM

Introduction:

Jenni Rodda, Curator, Visual Resources Collections, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

Speakers:

Eric M. Wolf, Director of the Library, New York School of Interior Design, *When there is No Ready-to-Wear: Triumphs and Failures in Creating an Image Database for Interior Design*

Kay Teel, Serials Catalog Librarian and Cataloger for the Arts, Stanford University Libraries and Academic Information Resources, *Overburdened but Underdressed: Library Catalogs*

John Lynch, Director, Vanderbilt Television News Archive, *Archiving in a Glass House*

Carol K. Rusk, Benjamin and Irma Weiss Librarian, Frances Mulhall Achilles Library, Whitney Museum of American Art, *The Hopper Research Collection, from Boxed Storage to Scholars' Resource*

Discussion Leader: Sharon C. Chickanzeff, Director, Stephen Chan Library, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Recorder: Elizabeth O'Keefe, Director of Collection Information Systems, Pierpont Morgan Library

Summary:

The moderator, Jenni Rodda, introduced the speakers and the central topic: the pros and cons of purchase versus local creation of information resources. Each speaker was asked to consider three issues in the context of his or her project description: why the resource was produced locally (instead of purchased); which professional standards were considered and/or implemented for the resource; how the resource will be shared with the larger community?

Eric Wolf described a project to digitize images needed to support the curriculum of the School of Design. Since the school offers only one major, in interior design, most of the content of commercially available art image databases is of little use. By creating a local resource, he was able to target exactly what was needed: images of

the decorative arts, furniture, interiors, design elements, etc. The images are made accessible through a database, IDOL, which has two audiences: onsite users only (for images with copyright restrictions) and the public (for images in the public domain). Scanning the images with the aid of work-study students and volunteers was relatively simple, but providing descriptions required both cataloging and subject expertise. For data standards, he drew upon the VRA Core and Cataloguing Cultural Objects (CCO) (in preparation), as well as AACR2 (since the more compatible the records are with AACR2, the easier it will be for students to use both the library catalog and IDOL). The use of standards allows users from other institutions to use the database and saves on training when new staff are hired. The popularity of the database has prompted a flood of requests from faculty to provide digitized images for their courses. This requires tactful handling, and the setting of priorities such as class size for image selection. Among the rewards of the project is that the library owns the content, instead of being at the mercy of a vendor, and that the library has been recognized as the provider of an important new resource that they can share (within the limitations of copyright) with other institutions.

Kay Teel's presentation focused not on a specific project, but on cataloging as a value-added service. The information in library catalogs is more valuable than ever, with library OPAC's being the gateway not just to print collections but to online resources. But cataloging departments are hard pressed to keep pace with new acquisitions. They rely increasingly on vendor-supplied records, and make fewer adjustments to existing copy. Most of the time this strategy works, though there are a number of tradeoffs. These include a decrease in record sharing (vendor-supplied records may be copyrighted and therefore not contributed to bibliographic utilities), loss of cataloging quality, sacrifice of local organizing traditions, such as adding extra notes and tracings relevant to a local collection, and less professional satisfaction and skill development for catalogers, who are encouraged to focus on productivity rather than quality. Administrators should keep in mind that library cataloging is in itself content, not just a guide to content; the creation of access points, tables of contents, and notes relating to local holdings adds value to the catalog. Catalogers must prioritize: depending on the library's needs, they may want to give special treatment to local collections, material relating to their own institution, or material under-represented in bibliographic databases, such as books from developing countries or small press books. Other enrichments are links to marked-up text, page images, thumbnails, and scans of title pages.

John Lynch described the creation and dissemination of the Vanderbilt Television News Archive. The Archive was created in 1968 by Paul Simpson, a Vanderbilt alumnus. Seeking evidence of liberal bias in the national news media, he was told by the networks that they did not archive videotapes of news shows, but simply taped over them. (The networks did not start to archive videotapes until the 1970s; film—used in the 1950s—was preserved because it could not be reused.) Simpson began recording the news broadcasts directly from the screen, using a one-inch type-A recording medium. The tapes were stored at the Vanderbilt University Library. Demand from researchers for access to the collection impelled the Archive to provide other libraries with copies of the tapes (this led to a suit for copyright infringement, which the Archive won), and to develop an indexing and abstracting system modeled on Facts on File and the New York Times Index. Lynch was hired in the early 1990s to computerize the project. He developed an online database accessible through Gopher, and arranged for OCR'ing of the abstracts and indexes. The quantum leap in news coverage in the 1990s has led to budget problems for the Archive. They have had to cut back on indexing, which is more costly to produce, although it provides

better access (cf. the evolution in terminology for AIDS; a search of abstracts for "AIDS" will not retrieve early stories on the disease). The Archive currently provides access on the web to the abstracts but not the indexes. The delivery medium for the broadcasts has recently been changed to streaming tapes (available only to subscribers to the Archive).

Carol Rusk described the processing of the Hopper Research Collection. Edward Hopper had a long and close relationship with the museum, and bequeathed a major part of his artistic estate to the Whitney. Ongoing in-house research on the artist for exhibitions and for a catalogue raisonné has generated an extensive collection of research materials including photographs of Hopper, documentary photographs of the Whitney's Hopper drawings, past exhibition records, curatorial files and notebooks, and reviews and essays on Hopper. Although considered a major asset of the museum, the collection was unprocessed, and was moved to offsite storage in the mid-1990's. In 2002 an outside researcher, Beth Colleary, obtained a grant to support her research on Hopper. She offered to use the grant to bring the Hopper research material back to the library and to process it. With the help of an intern, a consulting archivist, Nancy Johnson, and the Museum archivist, the collection was rehoused, and a finding aid drafted. When completed, the finding aid will be published in hard copy and on the Web.

Following the presentations, Sharon asked the panelists to comment on their institution's awareness, understanding, and support of the projects. Eric Wolf replied that the School of Design has been behind the project from the start and provided financial support; Kay Teel said that there is support and awareness of the value of cataloging at the intermediate level (i.e. technical services) but not at the university level; John Lynch indicated that Vanderbilt was willing to lend its name and prestige to the Archive, though not to offer financial support; Carol Rusk said that the Whitney had many competing fund-raising challenges, and little understanding of what the library did, so it will take time to build support for projects that build resources.

The panelists instanced a number of motives for creating content. Wolf noted that the database provided users with a valuable service and that they conveyed their appreciation to the administration; it was also intellectually satisfying to produce a resource other institutions can use. Teel responded that in addition to enjoying cataloging personally, she felt it was critical to the mission of a large university library to make its acquisitions accessible. Lynch instanced the rewarding experience of watching students gain a better understanding of history by viewing the televised Kennedy-Nixon debates. Rusk cited the staff's commitment to the library's collections and desire to make hidden treasures more accessible. She noted that there are no plans to digitize the Hopper archive, since much of the material is still restricted or under copyright.

In order to alert other institutions to the existence of the resources described, the speakers plan to use Google (for the IDOL database, and for access to abstracts of the news broadcasts), a collection-level record in the library OPAC (for the Hopper material), and records in the bibliographic utilities (a collection-level record in OCLC for the Vanderbilt Archive).