Session/Meeting Name: The New Deal: Reforming the Discreet Practices of Libraries, Archives, and Museums
Date, Time: April 24, 2010, 4 pm – 5 pm

Moderators: Jennifer Pollack
Recorder: Alison Huftalen

Abstract
Historically, archives, libraries and museums have shared a common mission: To collect and catalog, preserve and protect, and provide access to objects of cultural, intellectual, historical, and artistic importance. The institutions were silos in which specially trained individuals such as archivists, librarians, and curators served as the collectors, keepers, and main point of reference for their respective establishment and collection. Today, monetary resources are in short supply and with the ever-pressing need to stay relevant, archives, libraries, and museums are taking a different tack. Archivists, librarians, and curators are pooling expertise, collections, and monetary resources and working together to provide robust online access to their collective holdings. Institutions are building virtual bridges to one another (and to users) by way of collaborative websites and cross-collection search tools. Douglas Dodds of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and Margret Schild of the Theatre Museum and Film Museum in Düsseldorf, Germany share their own experiences with such collaborations. Topics that will be discussed include the standardization and presentation of metadata; intellectual property; digital preservation; collaborative collection development; the utilization of innovative, emerging technologies; and the future of art librarianship.

Moderator: Jennifer Pollock

Speakers

Library Management Meets Collection Management - New Partnerships, Traditional Methods and Strategies: Examples of Good Practice in Germany
Margret Schild, Theatre Museum and Film Museum, Dusseldorf, Germany

Virtual and Actual: Library, Archive and Museum Collaboration at the Victoria and Albert Museum
Douglas Dodds, Senior Curator, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

Margret Schild could not make it to the conference.

Session starts with an introduction by the Moderator

Douglas Dodds begins his talk
He is a Librarian by training and has been at the V&A for a long time.

The V&A

It is UK's national museum with 2.7 million objects. It has Display collections and Study Collections
The museum has 4 main sites: South Kensington, Museum of childhood, Blythe House, Olympia - Study center and the V&A website. There are a number of Curatorial departments including, Asia, Childhood, Furniture and more.

The Word & Image Department was created in 2001/02. It includes the National Art Library, Prints/Paintings/Photography Collections, the Archive of Art & Design at the Blythe House, the V&A Archive. This department contains 2 million + objects and 3 study rooms.

There are 3 sections to the Department. Access includes both onsite and online. Librarians operate more broadly across collections. From documentation to reference and more.

Central Services consists of cataloging, documentation, digitization, loans and more. Collections is made up of the Prints and Drawings study room which also includes British architectural drawings from the Royal Institute of British Architects which is good for the user since they can have access. There is a 20th century gallery, and the library which has more recently moved in. The Artist's books in the National Art Library are included.

Documentation Systems in the department are: library management systems, EAD for the Archives, a collection management system for the museum collections (which they are hoping to replace), a Digital asset management system which is out of Great Britain (VADAR+) and the website, which they are relaunching later in the year.

There is the "The William Morris Question". What have we got on William Morris? One has to look in different places, Library, Collections, Archives, even in the fabric of building. Current work is ongoing on a Core Systems Prototype Architecture which is a cross variety of data but not good enough to be public. For example the Smithsonian has a nice discovery system.

Beyond the Silos of the LAMS: OCLC, Report 2008
The V&A was a participant in this project. Why did they participate? To engage with colleagues in other organizations, to engage with colleagues in other parts of the V&A, to develop collaborative projects and to achieve buy-in from V&A senior management.

Currently working on a large scale digitization
The ground floor project. Outcomes: enhanced "search the collections", extensive discussion about new website, a greater focus on cataloging and Collections digitization.

Search the Collections is a version of collections database with 50,000 objects. A new version was relaunched last fall. They transformed the model with a lot of information and permanent beta. There was an interest to put it out and make more images available. It is a bit like a library catalog but is searching the collections database instead. There is a light box of images after search and more advanced options if needed.

With the Individual Record you have an option to order this image. You can download many images directly from database (depends on copyright situation). There was a risk analysis of what to put up but they were fairly liberal about that. For Downloading there are Terms & Conditions, Low Resolution images and High Resolution images. There is an Overhead in processing for academic purposes and it wasn't making money. For a print
run for less than 4000, you can just go ahead and use the image.

The API - Application Programming Interface with publishing information which explains how to.

For access to the collections you can search collections on the iphone. You can find collection images on Google Images. By going into Google directly, then linking back to the V&A database.

FABRIC Project Prototype. You can query by image.
Content, shapes, colors... different audiences
Work with other institutions e.g. Liberty of London textile firm
Next couple of months available

The Factory Digitization Project

How entering into database particularly for prints and drawings collections.
Older prints, drawings & paintings catalogue entries. Using old indexes etc.
Created digital images of the actual pages as an interim measure.
Included published catalogues of the collections.

The project started in December 2007. It was the systematic digitization of the entire collection, no cherry picking. We used high-resolution cameras and a large format scanner. Also scanning and keying in of text from V&A publications and catalogue entries. The production lines, audit, conservation, photography, and cataloguing transformed earlier published catalogue entries, attributions etc. and current and earlier information about the object, retaining original text.

Examples of digitized collections are: Wallpaper, the entire collection is online; pro-democracy posters; manuscript cuttings; architectural drawings, the national photographic record; Old Master Drawings.

There was external funding to add more layers of funding to what is there already. Produced 30,000 images for the project and 50,000 catalog records.

Online records 1,031,267
Online images 162,284
Online records with image 123,239

Major increase from August 2009 to March 2010

Computer Art and Technocultures Project

Birkbeck and Arts & Humanities Research Council. Project focused on computer generated art. Large grant. Actively collecting computer art collections, mainly works on paper. The aims and objectives were to: document collections, create high resolution images, a project website, create a context, chronology, descriptive cataloging, and research, describe the subject matter and link to individual artists. http://www.technocultures.org.uk/
www.vam.ac.uk/computerart

Digital Pioneers (Dec 2009-Apr.. 2010)
Digitize archival material, artists' books, works on paper.

Cross search collections
http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/
When the department was first established we were bringing together certain synergies. Things wouldn't have happened without the department being structured that way. The engagement with curators etc. We were outside of silos of institutions. There were changes to the staff structure. There was a belief in operating across bigger areas.

QUESTIONS

What are the criteria for enhancing cataloging?
   If data already existed in usable form, grab it.

Are you adding subject indexing?
   To an extent but using a broad brush ("tombstone information"). Focus on enhancing for a particular project.

Reorganization of departments?
   In a series of stages.

Number of dedicated staff to this project? Partially dedicated?
   Curators are meant to be responsible for their collections, including documentation/Infrastructure project - building blocks, add information.
   6 FT staff who catalog records
   A few for images
   Curators are involved in individual projects.

How did you convince the institution to go for quantity over quality?
   It was Top-down, the director had that view.
   Museum has a historic reputation for being an authoritative source of information, to move away from this is major, and had to come from the top.

How do you track use of works on paper, researchers etc.
   What gets used in study room
   What is being searched for in online systems (stats).

Publication of incomplete records - lot of input from archivists? More product, less process?
   Brooklyn Museum - their records have an indication of completeness.
   The system will default and show the best records first.
   Public access description
   Push for more product
   Archive of art & design oversees archive and objects.

Program design?
   Designed by a firm for the V&A

Was there engagement in design?
   Yes, a lot.

Are there applications for discrete institutions that would apply to the kind of integration that you've done across departments?
   Hard to achieve, since we are one institution.
   Institute of British Architects, do certain things for them
   Harder to do in detail
Organized museum/library workshops
Sept. 20 and 21, Smithsonian Institution,
intra-institutional collaboration

How does it related to the registrar?
They have a collections information system
Planning to upgrade for more fully developed, will include all functions of a registrar
Back end system that feeds into this system
Updated every few weeks
Not yet instantaneous, eventually probably.
British Museum - updated frequently. If someone asks question that relates to object. They answer by updating the record.

Back-end systems?
Library management system - Horizon, Sirsi-Dynix.
Museum database - Systems simulation.
Archives - EAD
Finding a system that will absorb the archival information in it

How do you handle rare books?
Images to link to library data - difficult
manuscripts also an issue, whole in library, fragments in museum collections

How do you deal with multiple images associated with an object?
You can associate multiple images with 1 record.
Store metadata in image
Inviting people to do the cropping for us