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Unique Collections: Local, Consortial, and Beyond

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Orbis Cascade Alliance Council of Deans and Directors Meeting
Lacey, Wash., March 13, 2014
Collecting in Late Modernity

Collection as a context for discovery

Figure from Susan Pearce, On Collecting (1995)
Collecting in Late Modernity

OCLC Collections Grid (2003)

Stewardship

Uniform & Global

Unique & Local

Low-High
Books & Journals
Newspapers
Gov Documents
CD & DVD
Maps
Scores

High-High
Special Collections
Rare books
Local/Historical Newspapers
Local History Materials
Archives & Manuscripts
Theses & dissertations

Low-Low
Freely-accessible
web resources
Open source software
Newsgroup archives

High-Low
Research & Learning
Materials
Institutional records
ePrints/tech reports
Learning objects
Courseware
E-portfolios
Research data
Prospectus
Institutional website
“The term “special collections” has been used in North American libraries in many different ways. One of the more restricted uses designates special collections as rare books, generally dating from the dawn of European printing to some point in the 19th century, with the addition of rare editions and special printings of a later date, often known as the “book arts”. More often the term is used to include manuscripts, archival collections of mixed format including prints, drawings and photographs, and graphic materials such as maps, theatrical publications, pamphlets, advertizing [sic] and posters, and sometimes newspapers, which were not published in book form. “Special collections” also can be extended to include distinct collections of material relating to a particular subject or part of the world or sometimes reflecting the output of a particular publisher; and in this definition the materials often will be in non European languages. By the end of the 20th century, the collections of most libraries of any size had proliferated into numerous additional formats: film and video, audio tapes, microfilm, and other formats for written communication. A new information revolution also had established born-digital materials as an essential part of the holdings of research libraries, though they entered the consciousness of library administrators and their budget calculations first as scientific journals and databases, not a form of communication generally designated as special collections.”

—Special Collections in ARL Libraries (ARL, 2009)
“Unique Collections”

“unpublished or rare materials that are unique to the institution that holds them.”
—NWDA

Unique collections supporting local distinctives:

- Identity
- Curricula
- Scholarship
Unique Collaborations

- Consortial
- Local
- Beyond

- Stuff
- Staff
- Space
- Systems
Unique Collaborations

- **Local**
  - Access (stuff, space)
  - Instructional, research, administrative use (staff)

- **Consortial** (e.g., NWDA)
  - Training (staff)
  - Procedures (systems)
  - Tools (systems)
  - Discovery platform (systems)
  - R&D: EAP; IR pilot; digital preservation; user studies (staff, systems)

- **Beyond** (e.g., NWDA)
  - ArchiveGrid (systems)
  - EAC Standard (systems)
Shared Needs

• DPWG NWDA/Alliance Member Surveys, NWDA Researcher Needs Study, IMLS Planning Grant (2007-2009)
  ➢ Greatest need: to expose and integrate finding aids and digital content
  ➢ Digital preservation
  ➢ Digital content hosting

• DST Surveys and Work (2010-2013)
  ➢ XSU project and support
  ➢ Digital preservation training and assessment of organizational readiness
  ➢ Need for shared digital content standards
  ➢ Shared IR pilot
Shared Needs, Cont.

- IMLS XCU Grant (2010-2013)
  - AEW demonstration site based on user testing and feedback
  - Professional evaluation: meets needs of end-users
  - Need for shared digital content standards
  - Need for metadata cleanup
- NWDA Member Strategic Initiatives Survey (2014)
  - Digital preservation services
  - Broader program offerings for UC
  - AEW development
  - ArchivesSpace
Design for Engagement
Maximize Impact

- A portal for discovery and understanding
- A platform for creative technical development
- A strong public option for the 21st century
Design for Engagement:
Enhance the teaching, learning, and research environment for engaging unique content

- **Local**: Faculty and staff connect students, faculty and others with collections (stuff, staff, space)
- **Consortial**: DP (stuff, staff, systems)
- **Consortial**: AT → AS; NWDA DB → AEW (staff, systems)
- **Beyond**: ArchiveGrid → DPLA (systems)