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Music and Media at the Millennial Crossroads
THE FUTURE OF LIBRARIES AND CATALOGING IN A
NETWORKED MULTIMEDIA PUBLICATION ENVIRONMENT:
SOME SPECULATIONS

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I. Introduction

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The central question asked in this talk is this: If most current materials are eventually distributed electronically in a networked multimedia publication environment, what might the future of libraries and cataloging be?

First, some reasons it might NOT happen (These problems, if not solved, might make the Internet turn out to be a party to which nobody came--or perhaps to which they came, became bored, and moved on...):

A. Copyright: content providers may in the end prove to be too nervous about piracy to put up any significant commercial content for this type of distribution

B. Greed for profit: if access proves to be too expensive for most people to afford, it may appeal only to a small wealthy market

C. The ease of use problem; at least partly due to total lack of cataloging. This is perceived even by people who write columns for computer magazines:

"Picture a vast, echoing library, with row upon row of books, containing all the world's knowledge. Citizens wander in from time to time and add a book wherever they please. The volumes are in no particular order; there's no card catalog and no Dewey decimal system. There are, however, a number of independent librarians who scurry about perusing and indexing the books. Each librarian's index is fiercely separate from the rest, and each index references only a fraction of the library's contents. A bad dream? No, it's a description of the Internet as we know it today."

Neil J. Rubinking. "Better Internet searching." PC magazine August 2000, p. 119.

D. Is home computer use really widespread enough? The U.S. census figures from 1997 indicate only 36% of U.S. homes sampled had a computer, and that does not address the question of how many of those computers are actually being used frequently. When I consider the people I know (friends and relatives), those who use the computer frequently at home tend to be people who use a computer frequently at work; I also seem to know a fair number of people who don't have a computer and are not interested in getting one, or who have a computer but never use it. They are very hard to install and maintain and they eat up a lot of your time!

E. The lack of standards for digitization. I can't read your document or your picture!

F. Legitimate concerns regarding authenticity and preservation, many of which are related to the lack of standards, and the rapid change in unstandardized formats

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II. The future of libraries if it happens:

A. Some good things that might happen (that we, as librarians, should support):

1. Easier, cheaper distribution could lead to more information being available to people with limited resources
2. Archival materials can be used without being "used up"; this may make possible more democratic access to archival materials; already school children can consult precious original documents on the Internet. Potential to create a virtual research library and archive that is the largest and has the most democratic access in the history of the world.
3. Access from anywhere at any time (using the "library" at midnight)
4. No need (eventually) to acquire special equipment to view video, play sound recordings, etc.? Remember that the need for special equipment for most nonbook materials drives much of our current obsession with describing physical format clearly...

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B. Some bad things that might happen

1. Limitation to materials that appeal to a mass market; already happening with "off-line" book publishing; already happened in network broadcasting, first to radio and then to television, in the U.S. anyway
2. A paradox: Could easier, cheaper distribution cut the library out of the loop? Would high costs actually work in our favor, providing a justification to

continue to use tax dollars to purchase information for a particular tax-paying community to share?

3. Might we end up with a pay-per-view economy for all information, including monographs, videocassettes and sound recordings that up until now it was possible for one person or one library to purchase outright, own indefinitely, and lend without incurring any further charges?

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III. The future of cataloging, if it happens (cataloging, defined as human intervention for information organization, as opposed to total machine processing of information as is found now on the Internet)

A. Introduction: Could artificial intelligence turn out to have been the Alchemy of the 20th Century? (Alchemy was the precursor of chemistry; those who practice it hoped to be able to turn so-called "base metals" into gold.

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I would like to posit two assumptions, or two "givens" about human intervention for information organization:

1. The first assumption is that authority control is central to what we do:

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Is this person with the same name a different person or the same person?

Boyd, William, 1890-1935.

Boyd, William, 1895-1972.

[Both actors; the second played Hopalong Cassidy.]

Is this work with the same title a different work or the same work?

Heaven can wait (1943)
Heaven can wait (1978)

Is this subject with the same name a different subject or the same subject?

Power (Mechanics)
Power (Social sciences)

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Conversely: Is this person with a different name actually the same person?

Hayworth, Rita, 1918-1987.
x Cansino, Margarita Carmen, 1918-1987
x Cansino, Rita, 1918-1987

Is this work with a different title actually the same work?

An American scholar

An oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, August 31, 1837

(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Is this subject with a different name actually the same subject?

hypnosis
hypnotism

The corollary to my statement earlier that authority control is central to what we do is that if authority control is not carried out, there is no point in preferring human intervention to automatic machine-driven information processing techniques. Human intervention is much more expensive and there is much less value added without authority control.

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2. The second assumption I would like to posit is that
 - a. People don't want to have to pay for information organization.
 - b. People don't want to believe how expensive it is.

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Given these two assumptions (authority control is central and people don't want to have to pay for it), there are three possible scenarios:

1. Do without human intervention altogether (the current Internet minus Yahoo)
2. Provide human intervention for information organization only for a small elite that can afford to pay for it, perhaps a corporate elite or the military/industrial complex
3. Use tax dollars to pay for human intervention for information organization to benefit society at large. Note that this question needs to be considered separately from the question of the survival of libraries as institutions to purchase information on behalf of the public. As a profession, we could

specialize in the organization of information that we don't necessarily "own" (as is already happening with various projects to catalog the Web)

After all, we have always specialized in the organization of information that we do not produce and to which we don't own the rights. As such, we have always served as a bridge between the private and the public sectors...

Lest you are starting to feel like the harness-makers of the new millennium--Don't get discouraged. We catalogers, too, have our fans...

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B. The future of cataloging: The "seamless interface" and "interoperability."

The people who use these current buzzwords are not being very clear about how they define them; even Sherry declined to define her use of the term "interoperability." It is possible that one of the following three definitions might be meant. The first would be unfortunate. The second two might present great opportunities for providing better access to information than we have ever been able to before...

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1. First possible definition: Are these phrases like "family values," that is, phrases that are used to conceal another meaning, in this case, the meaning, "let's not catalog or provide authority control any more since we can't catalog everything"? By the way, it should not be forgotten that we have not had a

"seamless interface" since the turn of the century when libraries ceased to have the resources to create catalog records for journal articles, short stories in anthologies and the like, and turned these functions over to the abstracting and indexing industry.

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2. Second possible definition: Could the desire for a "seamless interface" and "interoperability" allow us to discuss the possibility of creating a virtual single catalog (selectively inclusive) in which we cooperate to provide authority control for all works of permanent value so that all members of our society may have easy access to our permanent cultural record? Currently the intellectual work is made considerably more expensive and considerably less efficient by the fact that we are maintaining thousands of different catalogs...

Consider why we don't currently share the creation of authority records for uniform titles for moving image materials (i.e. creation of an authority record for a moving image work, with a heading that is made unique by the addition of qualifiers, if necessary, and with cross references from all other titles under which a particular moving image work has been released or broadcast):

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Reasons:

a. LC doesn't catalog these materials (for the most part); the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division catalogs rare and unique materials using special archival rules; no one at LC

catalogs for media collections in public, school and academic libraries.

b. There is no single catalog to catalog against e.g. in determining whether or not there is a conflict (two different works with the same title) and therefore whether or not a uniform title is necessary, and, if it is, what elements are necessary to resolve conflicts

c. Uniform titles are optional in AACR2 and their application is limited by LCRI (although this limitation was recently made local to LC, thanks to the efforts of members of our community); the underlying reason is undoubtedly a perceived lack of resources available for creating uniform titles for monographic works entered under title

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3. Third possible definition: Could the desire for a "seamless interface" and "interoperability" allow us to discuss the possibility of designing standards for indexing and display of our records? The desire for indexing and display standards is strong, judging by the interest in the IFLA initiative to make recommendations about OPAC displays and the new Z39.50 initiative on indexing.

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C. The future of cataloging: Personnel: Highly educated poorly paid middle-aged women or under-educated overpaid young men? Sexism is practiced in subtle ways in women-dominated professions such as librarianship... If you want to read more about it, you can't do better than to start with the writings of Roma Harris.

D. The future of cataloging: The nature of the electronic document and the implications for cataloging rules; none of the aspects of electronic documents discussed below is completely new

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1. Works of mixed authorship: how should works be identified? By title (i.e. uniform title) when created by the collaboration of a number of different people carrying out a number of different functions? By author when "based" on previously existing works entered under author?

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2. How can we help users differentiate between:
- a. the case in which two items are copies/manifestations of the same edition/expression of the same work (e.g. a digitized copy of a 35 mm. film placed on the Web as part of the American Memory Project at the Library of Congress)
 - b. and the case in which two items are two different editions/expressions (e.g. the two different versions of The Moving Image Genre-Form Guide, both available on the Internet, the older one dated Feb. 12, 1997 at www.tcf.ua.edu/screensite/res/bib/migenre.htm, the newer one dated February 1998 at lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mopic/migintro.html)

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3. How many will be works of changing authorship (to use Lubetzky's term for serials) AND changing

title? How can we track the changes and provide access under all of the variants that may turn up in user's citations and Web searches?

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4. What is a URL anyway?

Is it local? Or true of every copy?

Is it publication/distribution information (telling anyone anywhere how to obtain a copy--or how you could obtain one at the time the item was cataloged, at least) or more like a call number?

Should it go in the bibliographic record or the holdings record?

If several different URL's take you to the same Web page, should all URL's be listed in one record, or should a new record be made for each "path" to the document?

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Four examples:

1. [<www.ibiblio.org/hollerin/index.html >](http://www.ibiblio.org/hollerin/index.html)

This will take you to the Web site for the National Hollerin' Contest in Spivey's Corner, North Carolina, where you can hear a number of examples of "hollerin", a folk practice in the South. Anyone can go there and it doesn't cost any money.

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2.

<<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edhome.html>>

This will take you to the Edison films available on the Web in digital form at the American Memory site at the Library of Congress. Anyone can go there and it doesn't cost any money. Once you arrive, you have to search the underlying database for the title desired.

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3. <<http://gallery.euroweb.hu/logo.html>>

<<http://www.kfki.hu/%7Earthp/>>

Both these URLs will take you to the Web gallery of art, a searchable database of digitized images of European paintings and sculptures of the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods (1200-1700). Currently there are two different OCLC records for this work each differing only in URL, and publisher as extracted from the URL (EuroWeb Internet Service Provider Co. for the first and KFKI, or Központi Fizikai Kutató Intézet at the Magyar Tudományos Akadémia for the second).

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4. <<http://afi.chadwyck.com/>>

This will take you to the AFI catalogs of feature films (really bibliographies), which are licensed for access over the Internet to UCLA faculty, staff and students by Chadwyck-Healey. Thus,

only UCLA IP addresses will allow one to search the AFI catalogs at this site.

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5. Does the text accompany the moving image, or does the moving image illustrate the text? How can we describe multimedia in a way that indicates the relative weight of text, sound, moving image, still image, etc.?

Quotes from a review by Camilla Cai of a CD-ROM entitled Carl Nielsen: the man and the music published in 1998 and reviewed in the December 1999 issue of Notes:

Grand titles such as "Music," "Works," "Manuscripts," and "Discography" implied a wealth of actual printed, manuscript and recorded music. The fine print revealed the truth: "sixty music examples with a total of about forty minutes of music." Forty minutes of music is about twenty minutes less than an ordinary compact disc. I soon realized the full implication of the statement. Forty minutes divided into sixty examples means each example is forty seconds long, hardly much of a listening experience. Later I discovered that the content of scores and manuscripts was limited to reproductions of single pages. I expected much more multimedia content. ... The brochure with the CD-ROM mentions "some film clips"; there are four examples, about a minute each.

By the way, the person who cataloged this on OCLC wrote a fine summary note that makes it clearer, at least, that this was primarily a textual work but included some sound and moving image.

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6. How can we redesign the rules to take the form of "Add playing time if applicable?" (Reorganization by ISBD area...)

When you catalog one of the Edison films on the Internet, currently, with AACR2R as written, you are required to decide whether the "item in hand" is either an electronic resource (Chapter 9) or a motion picture (Chapter 7) before you can describe it physically (i.e. in either Area 3 or Area 5). If you choose to use Chapter 9, you cannot give playing time, sound or color characteristics, etc. in the physical description of the item because you cannot give a physical description at all. (It is no wonder that in practice audiovisual catalogers are choosing to use Chapter 7 rather than Chapter 9 for DVDs. However, they are not invoking rule 0.24 in AACR2R to make this decision in that they are focusing on the content (motion picture or moving image) not the carrier (digital optical disc))

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7. Area 5 (physical description), the GMD in Area 1 (which is related to Area 5), and notes about physical description (which are also related to Area 5) together consist of a mixed bag of descriptive elements that:

a. describe the carrier (manifestation); the GMD Videorecording may be identifying an exact copy (manifestation) of a 16 mm. film with the GMD Motion picture, in cases in which a 16 mm. film has been copied onto a 1/2 in. VHS videocassette in order to provide public access to the film.

b. describe and identify the expression (e.g. playing time of the director's cut as opposed to the original release version; ill. on the illustrated edition, etc.)

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c. may even sometimes describe and identify the work? (e.g. when the work consists of both sound and text, and that is not clear from the rest of the description? Or how about a map called Birds of America and a sound recording called Birds of America, not related to each other; the GMDs in this case would actually serve to identify and distinguish two different works.)

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Might we not benefit from better analysis of Area 5 (as well as the corollary Area 3 as applied to electronic resources) and an attempt to separate out those elements that describe the carrier from those that describe content (expression and work)?

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Rule of thumb: what continues to be true after digitization (playing time, color vs. b&w) and what does not (35 mm. vs. 16 mm., nitrate vs. safety)?

The following is the physical description of the original motion picture material used to make the digitized copy on the Internet at the American Memory Web site at the Library of Congress for the Edison film Circular panorama of Electric Tower:

1 roll (1 min., 26 sec.) (135 ft.) : si., b&w ; 35 mm.
safety positive print.

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Once the film was digitized, it was no longer:

1 roll
135 ft.
35 mm.
safety
positive
print

However, it was still:

silent
black and white
1 min. and 26 seconds long

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Does Delsey's concept of 'infixion' ('the formatting of intellectual and artistic content;' 'encoding modes') help us get at this distinction?

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Infixion:

ASCII vs. Word 97?
analog vs. digital?
optical track vs. magnetic track?
33 1/3 rpm vs. 45 rpm?
mono. vs. stereo.?
scope vs. letterboxed?
negative vs. positive?
b&w vs. col. (for b&w copy of film originally released in color? but see below)

Beta vs. VHS?
Single density vs. double density (electronic resources)

photocopy vs. original?
paperback vs. hardcover?
videocassettes vs. videodiscs? (SMD level)
audiocassettes vs. CDs? (SMD level)
motion picture vs. videorecording (GMD level)

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NOT infixion, because associated with change in expression:

sound vs. silent version of a film released at the beginning of the sound era
b&w vs. colorized
30 min. vs. 60 min. (long and short versions)

E. The future of cataloging: The nature of the electronic document and the implications for classification. When books on the shelf no longer need to be re-marked when changes are made in classification, and when the so-called "non-book" materials no longer need to be placed on a shelf by format, is it possible that we might be freed up to design a better classification? One that allowed assignment of more than one classification number per item, e.g. for multidisciplinary works? And perhaps one that could change much more rapidly over time to accommodate the rapidity with which academic disciplines form, merge and disperse?

Web sites

ALCTS CC:DA Task Force on Rule 0.24 official site:

<http://www.ala.org/alcts/organization/ccs/ccda/tf-024b.html>

Report available at:

ALCTS CC:DA Task Force on Rule 0.24. Report to CC:DA 1999 Annual. 1999. Available at:

<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/iasweb/personal/jcs/ccda/tf-024h.pdf>

ALCTS CC:DA Task Force on the Cataloging of Works Intended for Performance. Documents. 1996-97. Available at:

<http://www.ala.org/alcts/organization/ccs/ccda/tf-wks1.html>

<http://www.ala.org/alcts/organization/ccs/ccda/tf-wks2.html>

Delsey report:

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/jsc/aacr.pdf>

JSC site:

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/jsc/index.htm>