Law Librarian Other Scholarship                                    Law Librarian Scholarship

12-1-2006

# Technical Tips: Preparing for a Brave New World

Ellen T. McGrath
*University at Buffalo School of Law*, emcgrath@buffalo.edu

## Recommended Citation

# Technical Tips:  Preparing for a Brave New World

**by Ellen McGrath, University at Buffalo Law Library**

*Olac*
Online Audiovisual Catalogers
*...The Internet and AV Media Catalogers Network*

I want to extend a sincere thank you to ALLUNY for giving me a Miscellaneous Grant to cover the registration cost for the 12th Biennial OnLine Audiovisual Catalogers (OLAC) Conference in Mesa, Arizona, October 26-29, 2006.  It was my first trip to Arizona and I enjoyed the whole experience immensely.  The conference was jam-packed with information, but I will try to give you a small taste of what I learned.

The conference theme was "Preparing for a Brave New World: Media Cataloging on the Threshold of RDA."  Following

While columnist **Joan Hoolihan** reports on other matters *(see p. 8-10)*, column originator and ALLUNY grant recipient **Ellen McGrath** serves as guest Technical Tips columnist.

# Technical Tips: Preparing for a Brave New World

is a brief description of each of the sessions I attended. For more information, refer to the presentations available on the web at:
http://www.olacinc.org/conferences/2006.html

**RDA (Resource Description and Access): A New Cataloging Standard for a Digital Future**—opening keynote address by Jennifer Bowen (Head of Cataloging, University of Rochester/Head of Technical Services, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music & ALA Representative to the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) for the Revision of Anglo American Cataloging Rules (AACR)): As you should know by now, RDA is the new name for AACR3. It has been renamed completely because the change in structure from AACR2 is so drastic.

Jennifer had been to the JSC meeting in Washington, D.C. just the week before the OLAC conference. So some of the information was brand new and we were the first to hear it—how exciting! She began with some background about why this new standard is being developed to replace AACR2. Then Jennifer moved on to a description of RDA. It will be a "born digital" tool, which is a content, not a display, standard, and it will be independent of other metadata standards (as AACR2 is). Jennifer commented that there is still a lot of AACR2 in it, since there is no need to throw out what is working and has already been agreed upon. Not to mention that there is a need to ensure compatibility with existing records.

The newest information from what I had already heard about RDA is that the GMD (general material designation) will be replaced by new elements and the ISBD punctuation now present in AACR2 will be moved to an appendix and become optional. There will be fewer required elements; more of RDA will be optional. This means that libraries will need to make more decisions before they actually begin using RDA. But libraries will still be able to look to Library of Congress (LC) and the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) for guidance in making these critical decisions.

The timeline calls for RDA to be unveiled at the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Conference in Quebec City in August 2008--less than two short years away! Preliminary planning for training in the use of RDA is already underway. And as with most current training, there will be provision for some of it to be online. The RDA online product itself will allow for some customization by format and will help to guide the cataloging process.

Jennifer Bowen's summary of the JSC meetings has been posted on the CC:DA website in Word and PDF versions at: http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/index.html The links are in the "Reports" section at the bottom right of the home page.

The creation of RDA confirms the high level of cooperation and interaction in the cataloging community. When the beginnings of AACR3 were unveiled, catalogers protested that it was not changed drastically enough to respond to FRBR and other issues. The JSC listened to all the comments and created RDA instead. More than once during her presentation, Jennifer described instances where catalogers had given further input and JSC had responded. For example, the use of the word "citation" was dropped in response to law catalogers saying that term meant something totally different in law libraries. Also when one part or chapter was released for comment, catalogers said that it was difficult to give good feedback without knowing the big picture. As a result, the tentative timeline now includes time for a complete draft to be released and commented upon. I have no doubt that soliciting and trying to accommodate all these comments makes the work of the JSC very difficult. Yet the JSC recognizes that librarians know their users and the ultimate goal is to keep our users' needs front and center.

**Sound Recordings Cataloging** by Mary Huismann (Music Original Cataloger, University of Minnesota): Much of this session was focused upon musical sound recordings, but I also learned a great deal about the non-music, spoken word material I catalog on a regular basis. And I came away very grateful that I do not have to deal with the complexities of music cataloging--I thought legal uniform titles were bad! Mary provided an excellent handout with numerous resources available to assist in the cataloging of sound recordings.

This was what I consider a "classic" OLAC presentation. Mary walked us through the basics, from start to finish: use AACR2 chapter 6 (and chapters 1 and 9 as necessary), chief source of information issues, GMD=sound recording (for streaming audio, GMD=electronic resource), statement of responsibility, date(s) of publication, physical description and system

# Technical Tips

requirements for a growing variety of formats, accompanying material, notes (when in doubt, add a note, but be as clear and concise as possible), coding of 007 and 008, uniform titles, main and added entries, and subject headings. It was an amazing tutorial on cataloging sound recordings, delivered effectively and efficiently in just two hours!

**Introduction to Metadata for Educational Resources** by Robert Wolfe (Metadata Services Unit, MIT Libraries): The OLAC conference could almost be divided into two tracks in my assessment: "traditional" AV cataloging and metadata. In addition to this metadata session that I attended, there was also "Gathering Audio Metadata for the Monterey Jazz Festival Concerts" and "VRA Core 4.0 and CCO" (VRA=Visual Resources Association, CCO=Cataloging Cultural Objects), neither of which I could attend due to conflicts. I needed to attend the traditional track because I catalog audio and video regularly. But I was glad to attend this metadata session as well, although at a couple points it made me feel like I was part of the older cataloger generation ☺

Rob characterized his work as metadata consulting and production support on a cost recovery basis; most of his clients are from outside the MIT Libraries. He designs metadata models and workflows and trains others to apply them. In his words, he "helps people become librarians!" As Rob described writing business plans, I definitely felt that this was a brave new world of the conference theme. This presentation was full of interesting terms like learning objects (which are not the same as courseware objects), pedagogical value, podcasts, channel tags, atomic units, etc. There were a few ideas that especially stuck with me:

- Always be sure your metadata is consistent
- Repurpose existing metadata, rather than reinventing the wheel
- Continuity and institutional memory are needed (something which librarians know)

**Advanced Videorecordings Cataloging** by Jay Weitz (Senior Consulting Database Specialist, WorldCat Content Management Division, OCLC): This was another classic OLAC session and it focused mainly on the cataloging of videos and DVD. The specifics listed above in the sound recordings session were also covered here, but accompanied by the added peculiarities of videos: different date issues, subtitles/dubbing, special characteristics such as NTSC, PAL, regions, etc., special features, statements of responsibility in 245 vs. 508, production companies, CD/DVD combos, dual discs and on and on …

In his two-hour slot, Jay ran out of time and could not cover streaming video, though he did have one such record in his handout of examples. He inspired us all by saying that AV catalogers are the best in the world because we deal with the most difficult formats. Therefore we should have confidence in ourselves. What was Jay's main piece of advice? "Don't agonize!"

**Electronic Resources Cataloging** by Amy Weiss (Head of Cataloging and Database Management, University of California, Santa Barbara): This presentation sort of straddled the worlds of traditional AV cataloging (direct access of physical items) and metadata (remote access of purely electronic items). But it continued the classic OLAC approach by walking through the basics.

Amy began by stating that the cataloging rules may be less important than the reasoning followed during the cataloging process. In fact, electronic resources were the primary trigger for the whole content vs. carrier debate that evolved into the RDA development process. The MARC format chosen for electronic resources (and all other cataloging decisions thereafter) is based upon the content of the resource. So if the resource is composed of "print-like" content, catalog it as you would a book or a serial and then add back in the necessary electronic aspects. Electronic books, PDFs, podcasts, and integrating resources were also covered briefly. Amy provided a handout listing valuable resources.

**Non-print Cataloging, National Library of Kosovo** by Rebecca Lubas (Head, Cataloging and Metadata Services, MIT Libraries): Rebecca described her trip to Kosovo to train librarians in AV cataloging. It was



*(image from the Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/avprot/avprhome.html )*

# Technical Tips

interesting in the accidental way it all came about, as well as how quickly she pulled training material together, thanks in great part to the help of OLAC. The presentation included photos of Rebecca's trip and she also discussed current cultural and political issues in Kosovo. The university and public/municipal libraries in Kosovo are automating with ALEPH as their library management system. Barbara Ford (past ALA President) was on the same U.S. Department of State-sponsored trip to Kosovo. She provided advice regarding the forming of a professional library organization in Kosovo and the hosting of professional conferences.

**From Technical Services to Knowledge Management Services: Confronting Knowledge Organization in a Post-Disciplinary World** by Dr. John B. Howard (Associate Dean of Libraries, Arizona State University): John began with a summary of the Western knowledge tradition and an overview of the ASU Knowledge Network, which will be unveiled soon. In answer to the question, "Whither technical services?" he answered that its focus will shift away from the typical publishing world and to locally-created knowledge domains. Other frameworks will become part of technical services, in addition to the existing rules of AACR, MARC, etc. John sees this as a transitional time, evidenced by what he described as a downward trend in the use of OPACs. The distinctions between public and technical services continue to blur and merge.

There was a cataloging question and answer panel with Robert Freeborn, Verna Urbanski, and Jay Weitz. Most of the questions asked and answered in that session will likely end up in Jay's regular column "OLAC Cataloger's Judgment" in the *OLAC Newsletter* available on the web at: http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/cts/olac/newsletters/

The poster sessions were numerous and informative and all have information available on the conference presentations website at the URL given at the start of this report. Here's a list to give you the flavor of their depth and breadth:

- From DVCam to DVD: A Workflow for Integrating Videorecordings of Campus Events into the Online Catalog
- Challenges of Classifying a Video Collection at an Academic Library—Integrating a Video Collection into the Online Catalog
- NOAA Ocean Exploration Digital Video and Image Data: Archiving, Preserving, and Accessing Online Oceanographic Information
- NLM-CIT Collaborative Video Archive
- Cataloging Streaming Video on the Web: Collaboration between Catalogers, an Archivist, and a Documentary Filmmaker
- e-Books in the Online Catalog: Challenges and Opportunities
- RDA and Realia, Kits, and Other Funny Formats
- Mapping the Future: Digital Solutions for Historical Map Collections
- Stop the Backlog! Cross-training as a Response to a Growing Multimedia Collection
- The Preview Process in Cataloging Videorecordings: Collaboration with Media Staff & Student Assistants

The weather was beautiful during my time in Arizona, with temperatures in the low 80s during the day and in the 50s at night. I took the opportunity to participate in the two tours offered by OLAC in conjunction with the conference. The Desert Botanical Gardens Tour began in its Library, which was followed by a chance to roam the grounds on our own. Since I had never been to Arizona before, I was especially fascinated with the many types of cactus, as well as other plants and flowers growing in the desert.

I also went on the tour of the Pueblo Grande Museum, which is "located at a 1,500 year-old Hohokam village ruins in modern day Phoenix ... explore the ruin of an 800 year-old platform mound possibly used by the Hohokam for ceremonies or as an administrative center. An excavated ballcourt, and to full-scale reproductions of prehistoric Hohokam homes can be viewed along the ruin trail. The site also includes some of the last remaining intact Hohokam irrigation canals." It was a bit strange to stand among the historic ruins and simultaneously see the backdrop of the Phoenix freeways!

I was fortunate enough to attend an OLAC conference in 1990 in Rochester, N.Y. That training laid the foundation of my AV cataloging skills. But since it is essential to keep these skills up-to-date, it is reassuring to know that the same high quality conference is still offered by OLAC all these years later. Many thanks once again to ALLUNY and the UB Law Library for making it possible for me to attend this OLAC conference!