

The Cataloger and the Archivist Should Be Friends

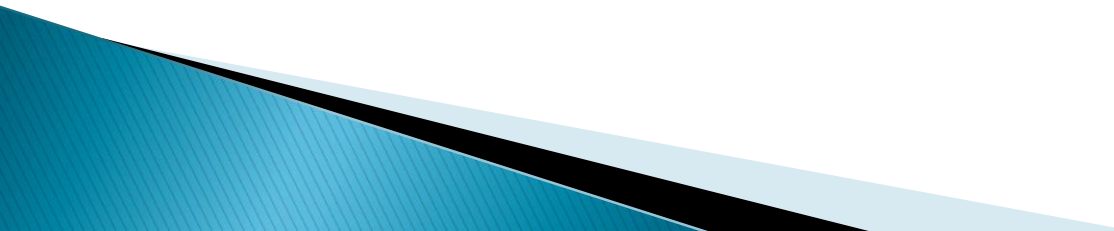
or, Herding vs. Milking Special Collections

Margaret Nichols
RBMS, June 24, 2010

The farmer and the cowman



ISAD(G)

- ▶ *Summarizing* the overall characteristics of a collection of material
 - ▶ Hitting the highlights, usually not concerned with minute detail or with extensive transcription
 - ▶ Description often has multiple levels
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ISAD(G) contents include:

MULTILEVEL DESCRIPTION

IDENTITY STATEMENT AREA

Title

Date(s)

CONTEXT AREA

Administrative / Biographical history

Archival [custodial] history

Immediate source of acquisition or transfer



ISAD(G) contents, cont.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE AREA

Scope and content

Appraisal, destruction and scheduling information

Accruals

System of arrangement

CONDITIONS OF ACCESS AND USE AREA

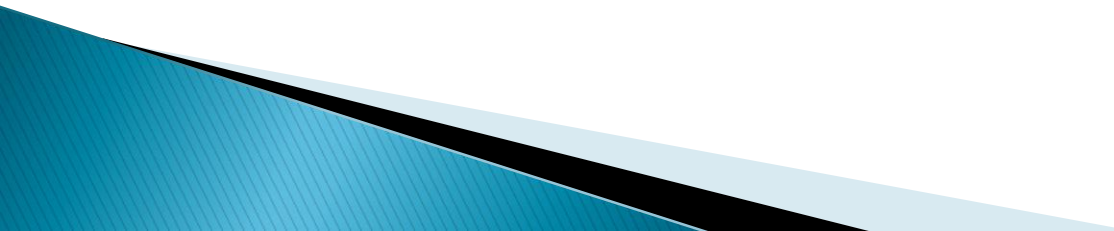
Conditions governing access/reproduction

Language/scripts of material

Finding aids



ISBD

- ▶ Precisely identifying a manifestation and *distinguishing* it from other manifestations of the same work
 - ▶ Emphasis on transcription
 - ▶ Definitive description at a single level
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ISBD contents include:

Title and statement of responsibility area

Edition area

Publication, production, distribution, etc.
area

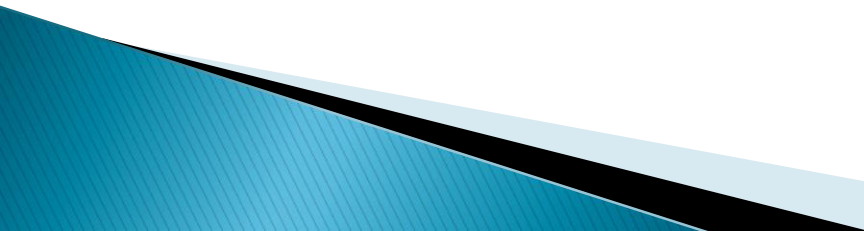
Physical description area

Series area


Note area

Appendix A. Multi-level description [for
multi-part resource only]

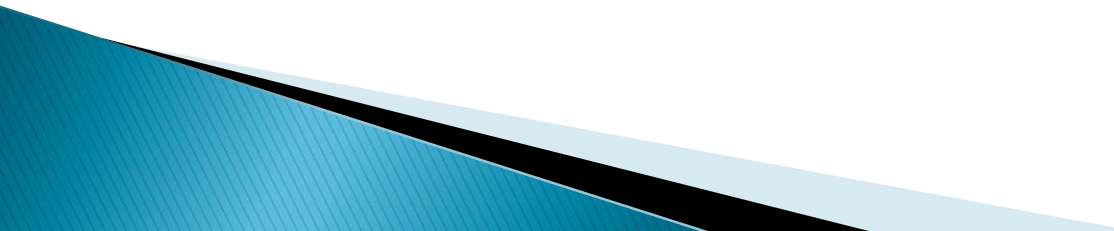
Fundamental differences

- ▶ Differing views of the importance of transcription
 - ▶ Differing views of the importance of the title
 - ▶ Differing concepts of creator/author
 - ▶ Standardization vs. flexibility
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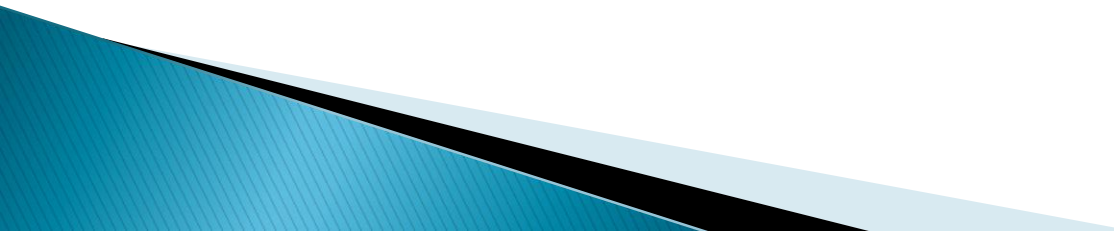
Different “material worlds”

- ▶ **Archives:** vast range of types of material; broad range of subjects; geographical, chronological, and linguistic range may be narrow; more material documenting “ordinary” lives
 - ▶ **Rare books:** narrow range of types of material; broad range of subjects; broader geographical, chronological, and linguistic range; may be more highbrow in focus
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Different thesauri

- ▶ Book catalogers: RBMS Controlled Vocabularies; MARC Relator Terms
 - ▶ Archivists: Art and Architecture Thesaurus
 - ▶ Both: LCSH
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Historical cataloging conditions

- ▶ Separate RLIN files for different formats
 - ▶ Separate cultures
 - ▶ Different training
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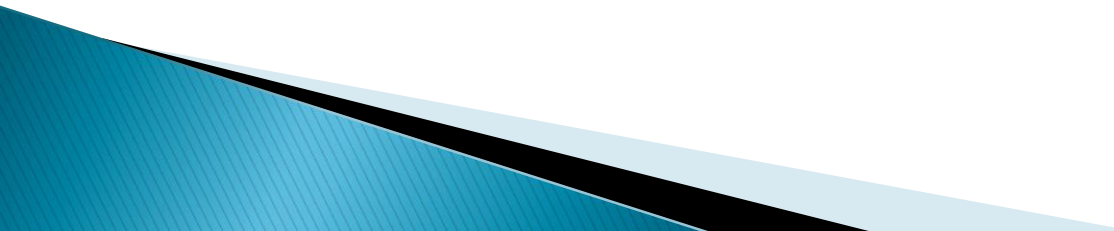
And one more difference ...




Personality differences



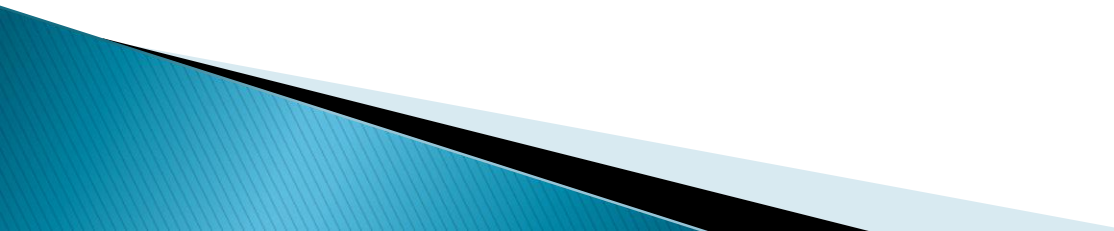
Forces for convergence

- ▶ More collection-level cataloging of print materials
 - ▶ The rise of metadata
 - ▶ Digitization projects
 - ▶ Tightening security
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“Territory folks should stick together”

- ▶ Both deal with weird exceptions
 - ▶ Both apply a knowledge of historical context
 - ▶ Both have to balance depth with speed
 - ▶ Both catalog for multiple types of users
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How to communicate better?

- ▶ More consultation across formats
 - ▶ Meeting grounds: collections of print material, bound manuscripts
 - ▶ Metadata conversations
 - ▶ Cataloging cosmopolitanism
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Format can be ambiguous



The future: cowman farmers?

