

Minutes of the Manuscripts and Other Formats Discussion Group  
ALA Midwinter, Dallas, TX  
Sat. Jan. 21, 2012, 1:30-3:30 pm., (Sheraton Dallas Hotel - Trinity 1)

Fifteen people met in the absence of the two conveners and an agenda, so we just started talking, and ended up having a lively two-hour discussion that touched on the following:

- The consequences of “More Product, Less Process” (e.g. scholars need to cite their evidence, but there’s no unique identifier to get someone back to that specific item; consider more liberal photography and photocopy policies so researchers can have a record of the source)
- It’s helpful to indicate when records are considered incomplete by the institution, since users can’t tell if it’s just a preliminary record made by someone who never saw the item or if it records everything you know about it
- The importance of local notes: WorldCat being used by scholars as a research tool, not just for copy-cataloging and interlibrary loan
- How to make hybrid material accessible (e.g., is this interleaved printed book filled with manuscript poetry a manuscript or a book? If the pieces can stand on their own intellectually, treat it as a bound-with and make two records)
- User-generated content and comments: there’s a middle-ground between no opportunity for communication and uncontrolled tagging and commenting (e.g., British Museum has hotlink in each record “Noticed a mistake? Have some extra information about this object? Please contact us” with an e-mail link that generates a subject line containing the record ID)
- What can museums and libraries learn from each other? Libraries becoming more open to expanding the catalog record beyond being a finding tool (e.g. conservation history; additional explanation about the item and its significance); museums becoming more open to controlled vocabularies; word of warning: don’t assume art handlers in a museum know how to handle rare books (e.g. exhibition loan book almost opened 180-degrees by an art handler for documentary photography)

Erin Blake (for William Modrow and Diane Warner)