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The current trends in ephemera cataloging and description are in web-based records, finding aids, MARC records. This paper discusses the literature devoted to ephemera cataloging and description since 1973 and identifies what kinds of ephemera cataloging repositories engage in today. Using seven repositories available on the free web at the beginning of 2009, the author has described the commonalities and differences among treatments of main entry and genre/form information. Observations are made on the effectiveness of traditional AACR2 standards of creating main entries and access points. The author makes recommendations for institutions wanting to come into currency with their ephemera descriptive cataloging.

Headings:

Printed ephemera

Grey literature

Descriptive cataloging

CURRENT TRENDS IN EPHEMERA CATALOGING

by
Jennifer A. Townes

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Introduction

“Kipple is useless objects, like junk mail or match folders after you use the last match or gum wrappers or yesterday's homeopape. When nobody's around, kipple reproduces itself. For instance, if you to go bed leaving any kipple around your apartment, when you wake up there is twice as much of it. It always gets more and more...”

No one can win against kipple” he said, “except temporarily and maybe in one spot...”

--J.R. Isidore, in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

In the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, Philip K. Dick describes a slowly dying Earth, the continuous cycle of radioactive decay little by little smothering the planet. The byproduct of this disintegration is called “kipple.”¹ Kipple is, by definition, an unwanted or useless object. Places can become infested with kipple, as is the apartment of the speaker in the quote above, J.R. Isidore. His home is filled with papers, broken furniture, dust, and junk. When we pull a wadded political flyer out of the bottom of our handbag, save a playbill from a production of *Madama Butterfly*, or pick up a brochure for our dream vacation, we don't call these things “kipple,” we call them “ephemera.” Transient, frangible — these are the materials that fill our scrapbooks, line our bulletin boards, and fill our mailboxes.

Ephemera also fills our libraries and archives, and while it may have some of the same properties as Dick's whimsical invention, it is certainly not a nuisance material. The Working Party on Ephemera reported in 2003 that “There is a growing awareness that ephemera reveal details of a kind that other documents may have ignored or treated

differently, and that they often convey the spirit of an occasion or period evocatively through their content, language and graphic style.”² From a researcher’s perspective ephemera can be priceless. It can have enormous informational value and often valid evidentiary and artifactual value. Ephemera can be an extremely important part of any local history collection.

Twyman has much to say on the significance of ephemera. Aside from being the best evidence for lithographical technical, social, and design innovations made in the nineteenth century, ephemera is significant for its content.³ It tells a story that may not otherwise be told – documentation of the quotidian, language, and social mores. Sometimes it can be the *only* representation left to history. A particular example of this is the Really Really Free Market in Carrboro, North Carolina. This organization is of a Marxist philosophy, periodically holding swap meets in downtown Carrboro. The only place this organization exists is in the marketplace and in its flyers. Ephemera like this exemplifies the need to represent the whole organization, not just the pieces that are convenient to preserve.

Libraries and archives, unfortunately, have a stormy relationship with ephemera. There are many problems associated with it, not least of which is quantity and access. In Dick’s novel, kipple is self-producing, and it seems that it comes from nowhere, multiplying every time you turn your back. Like kipple, an ephemera collection can quickly become ponderous and unwieldy. In 2003 the Association of Research Libraries addressed this exact issue, and launched a conference (Exposing Hidden Collections) to explore the state of ephemera in the twenty-first century. The literature on access problems goes back to the 1970s, with each decade adding a new level of urgency to the

matter. How are we to manage this flow of material? How are we to classify it, describe it, and keep it safe?

This study was born out of this dilemma and the author's close work with ephemeral material for the past three years. The purpose of the study is to assess the situation as it exists at the beginning of 2009, and answer the following questions:

- What does the literature say repositories should do in regards to cataloging ephemera?
- What cataloging techniques are currently being used by repositories?
- How effective are these techniques in terms of access?

To this end, the literature pertaining to ephemera access was examined for themes or trends. Those themes and trends were then applied to the cataloging records of six repositories chosen in October 2009. The goal of this research is to provide institutions struggling with ephemera description with detailed information on current practices to assess their own collections and compare them to the current trends in cataloging and ephemera processing.

Literature Review

If the literature contains a single motif, it is this: SOS!

“An accepted minimal standard for cataloging individual pieces of ephemera clearly would be useful” – Georgia Barnhill.⁴

“It is too late to create rules everyone would follow: too many different catalogues exist in too many unique institutional formats” – Julie Anne Lambert.⁵

“We’re all in this together. Good luck” – a respondent to Therese Lawrence’s survey.⁶

“Anyone who expects to find The Definitive Answer on how to provide access to visual ephemera in an archival and manuscript repository is doomed to disappointment” – Nancy Hadley.⁷

“Without any universal guidelines it is tempting to return to a ‘local system’ that has, in fact, served us well in the past” – Linda Stanley.⁸

Ephemera Presents Unique Challenges

Ephemera is difficult to define – Richard Kolbet of the University of Iowa compared the attempt to blind men describing an elephant.⁹ Chris Makepeace’s definition is probably the most often used:

Ephemera is the collective name given to material which carries a verbal or illustrative message and is produced either by printing or illustrative processes, but not in the standard book, pamphlet or periodical format.¹⁰

Much of the literature, however, prefers to describe ephemera rather than define it.

Young concludes that ephemera must be described by format, specifically, ephemera is

different from typical library formats¹¹ which fit easily into standard bibliographic description. He defines ephemera according to this framework:

Ephemera are printed artifacts, usually less substantial than books, which, though intended for specific limited purposes or events, are kept by libraries and archives because they contain continuing research value, notably for the study of popular culture.¹²

Furthermore, Makepeace's definition only describes printed material, but many other things such as campaign buttons, badges, magnets and bumper stickers (what the library profession terms "realia") tend to show up in ephemera collections. Ephemera share some characteristics: they are transient documents created for a specific purpose,¹³ and usually exist in a format other than the monograph. Ephemera also share some challenges.

Ephemera is often flimsy and made of cheap materials, and while ephemera is classifiable, it defies conventional description, storage, and acquisition methods.

It is as difficult to place ephemera in an institution as it is to define it. Does it belong in the library or in the archives? Many professionals lump realia in with ephemera, so perhaps it belongs in a museum? The North Carolina Collection (NCC) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has an extensive local ephemera collection. In 2007 the collection underwent an evaluation to determine the best practice for processing and cataloging. Of the many decisions facing the curator, chief among them was to keep the collection in the NCC or to give it over to the University Archives. The nature of the material – is this library or archival material? – was under scrutiny.

Ephemera can appear anywhere as separate collections, but also within other collections. In cases like this it is difficult to treat ephemera as a collective whole. Johnson and Snyder allude to this idea by describing the dispersal problem facing the

cataloger or curator of a performing arts collection.¹⁴ In a donated collection, from an important individual say, an archivist must adhere to the principal of respect-des-fonds. However, ephemera documenting the same event may be dispersed over different collections in the same library or archive, or in different parts of the same institution.

Dispersion is the case at any institution dealing with ephemera. Stanley's case study at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) demonstrates the problem. The HSP has three departments: the library, the Manuscripts and Archives department, and the museum collection. Through a liberal and vague collection development policy, ephemera exist in all three.¹⁵ This situation concerns the HSP staff, as material is often duplicated across all three departments and the lack of integrated, cooperative descriptive practices makes cross-searching impossible.

Ephemera also presents a challenge to cataloging and description. Traditional cataloging (LCSH, AACR2, LC classification) is a rigid structure that works quite well with items that have an explicitly stated authority, a predictable physical description, and which clearly fall into predetermined subject categories. However, the farther away from the characteristics of traditional printed material an item gets, the harder it is to apply traditional cataloging. Different sources from the literature describe traditional cataloging practices for ephemera as "inadequate"¹⁶ and "impractical."¹⁷ In 1989 Foley identified four things inherent to ephemera that contributed to difficulties in cataloging ephemera according to Dewey and LC standards: quantity of items, missing information such as dates or authority, description that defies the MARC 300 field, and extremely current subject matter all.¹⁸

Ephemera presents unique challenges by simple virtue of the many formats in which it can exist. Over the past three decades a few attempts have been made at developing a standard method of processing ephemera. No single attempt at standardization has been effective on a national scale, however, and they exist today as case studies and recommendations. These attempts are described in the following sections.

TRENDS

To ephemera collections, the problem of non-standardization is not new. In 1972, Lawrence surveyed libraries with a desire to understand the access landscape of ephemera collections.¹⁹ She was concerned that ephemera was inaccessible to researchers because of a lack of indexing, cataloging, and description, or perhaps unknown or non-existent procedures for doing so. The results of this survey indicate that libraries holding ephemera in 1972 engaged in descriptive cataloging, but only 18.2% of respondents indicated that each item in each category was cataloged.²⁰ In fact, each institution in the study handled ephemera in its own way.

In 1973, Akeroyd and Benedict inadvertently documented a hodge-podge method of descriptive cataloging when they compiled “A Directory of Ephemera Collections: A National Underground Network.” Akeroyd and Benedict profile fifteen different institutions that hold ephemera collections, seven of which describe their cataloging practices. The seven collections demonstrate a variety of cataloging practices. One collection, the Laird M. Wilcox Collection of Political Ephemera at the University of

Kansas' Kenneth Spencer Research Library, cataloged its eight linear feet of material and submitted those records to the National Union Catalog.²¹ Another, the Social Documents Collection at the University of Iowa, is cataloged by main entry – there is no descriptive cataloging.²² Only one collection, Akeroyd's Alternative Press Collection at the University of Connecticut's Wilbur Cross Library, had a thorough system of descriptive cataloging geared towards access. Akeroyd indicates that the Alternative Press collection employed a simple cataloging system, consisting of a "separate card file divided according to title or main entry, issuing group, subject, and place of publication or location of activity."²³ Akeroyd and Benedict find that many of the seven are arranged categorically, and few are indexed.

The variety found in Akeroyd and Benedict's sample is borne out elsewhere. A 1978 manual on local historical collection management states that all ephemera should be placed in a filing case by subject.²⁴ In an article oft cited by other sources, Michael Organ of the University of North South Wales Archive describes how in the 1980s the archive revamped their ephemera description process from filing items in a box marked "Ephemera"²⁵ to indexing items by provenance and subject/title.²⁶ The new method gave each item at least three access points, which made finding the item in the index easier. In 1985, Andrew Wrighting was charged with processing a collection of Victorian scrapbooks. When he found that AACR2 "proved its almost total failure to cover this type of material,"²⁷ he arranged the collection according to eight different areas: subject, subject heading, authority, content, place of publication date, condition, and color. He found this arrangement to be more flexible than traditional cataloging.²⁸

The Rise of MARC

The emergence of the OPAC in the early 1990s granted the MARC record new potential. Freed from the physical dimensions of the paper card, bibliographic records could expand to include more access points than ever before – something professionals had indicated was important for ephemera cataloging. Organ remarks that since ephemeral items are often “multifaceted,” describing them using more than one term makes processing and locating them easier.²⁹ Lambert contends that “The provision of as many access points as possible is one of the satisfactions of cataloguing ephemera,” and “we should be cataloguing the content of the item, including, of course, the images.”³⁰

The early 1990s through the present has been one long debate over the usefulness of MARC for ephemera cataloging. While some professionals decry MARC as an inadequate or outright restrictive tool to describe ephemera, other professionals have found success with it. Two 1996 articles are particularly illuminate this tension: Smith’s “Intellectual Control of Ephemera” and Greenberg’s “Subject Control of Ephemera: MARC Format Options.”

In her article, Smith retains a bleak outlook to cataloging ephemera, contending that “Assigning themes and subjects to a piece of paper ephemera is at best an exercise in second-guessing, at worst an imposition of the cataloger’s opinions.”³¹ In her opinion, the rise of the computer corresponds to a standard nomenclature,³² a thing which still does not exist. Others have commented on this lack of standards in general. In 1996, Stanley still sought a definition for her series of ephemera, and laments the lack of universal guidelines.³³ Twelve years later, in 2008, Barnhill remarks that “additional instruction about the management of ephemera collection is needed.”³⁴

Greenberg's article, in comparison, is optimistic. She believes that MARC, specifically the MARC-AMC and MARC-VM formats, is perfectly suited to handle ephemera in the online environment.³⁵ Greenberg is confident that MARC is robust enough to provide effective subject analysis as well, particularly for ephemera collections arranged singly or thematically.³⁶ She even believes that the subject analysis used in archives, when applied to ephemera, will alleviate the dispersal problem.³⁷

In 2006, Copeland, Hamburger, Hamilton, and Robinson the Pennsylvania State University Libraries Special Collections published a seminal article: "Cataloging and Digitizing Ephemera: One Team's Experience with Pennsylvania German Broadsides and Fraktur."³⁸ This article turns a corner on cataloging ephemera because of the detail it provides. The authors describe their cataloging approach to these materials at great length, including a break-down of the main entry, title and variant title, place of publication and name of publisher, date of publication, subjects and genres terms, added entries, and several notes fields. The most interesting decision, perhaps for its feeling of finality, is how to determine the content of the main entry. The authors stress that "The main entry was formulated based on rules applicable to the *type* of material."³⁹ This emphasis on type coincides with AACR2, *DACS*, and *Graphic Materials* to align ephemera description with other descriptive guidelines.

Where Wrighting and Organ and Copeland et al. describe treatments for specific collections, only the Copeland et al. article is thorough enough to be applicable to any repository using MARC for ephemera cataloging, large or small. Organ's solution in 1987 was to create an index, and Wrighting's solution in 1985 was to create a categorical arrangement. These are both fine solutions, but they have problems of scale and

complexity. Very large collections are unlikely to find an advantage in a categorical arrangement, and very small collections could be overwhelmed by an index. An ephemera collection with different levels of record (collection, series, item, event, etc.) could not exist in either an index or a categorical arrangement without some difficulty. In addition, growing open collections would be ill-served by either arrangement. The solution found by the Pennsylvania State librarians is flexible in scale and complexity, and thus applies to more institutions than Wrighting or Organ.

Despite this thorough endorsement of MARC for ephemera cataloging, there exists an even more recent disapprobation. At the 2007 Rare Book and Manuscript Section (RBMS) preconference, “From Here to Ephemerality,” Lambert refuted the merits of MARC for ephemera: “I remain totally unconvinced that MARC is the best format to use for cataloging ephemera.”⁴⁰ Her reasoning is that MARC is designed for monographs, thus neither the MARC format nor the ephemera record represented are well served by using it in another manner. At the same RBMS preconference, Georgia Barnhill discussed AACR2 for ephemera in her plenary session “Why Not Ephemera? The Emergence of Ephemera in Libraries.” She argues that AACR2 rules designed for monographs do not fit ephemera very well and that a lack of ephemera cataloging standards was a hindrance.⁴¹

Over twenty years have passed since Lawrence’s first call of alarm and libraries are still on their own in terms of cataloging and access. On the thirtieth anniversary of Lawrence’s survey, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) convened a Special Collections task force in 2003 dedicated to addressing the challenge of providing access to uncataloged and unprocessed special collections material.⁴² They met at a conference

called “Exposing Hidden Collections” to discuss their results, and lament the problem of unprocessed pamphlets and printed ephemera. Though the task force was called to discuss issues facing every facet of special collections, ephemera is one type of material that particularly highlights the problems facing repositories today, and calls for new solutions.

The Special Collections task force succeeded in turning the profession’s eye to unprocessed collections, and with it, to uncataloged ephemera collections. The task force published its final report in 2006, giving an account of its activities since the “Exposing Hidden Collections” conference. These activities inspired some institutions to apply for grants to fund digitization projects⁴³ and, in 2008 the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) launched a program to fund special collections cataloging projects. Among the institutions granted the first awards was the California Historical Society, with its proposal to create a searchable, online catalog linking the ephemera collections of four different repositories.⁴⁴

The Online Environment

The online environment provides several options for institutions wishing to either enhance their MARC records or abandon them altogether: enhanced online public access catalogs (OPACs) and web-based records.

Enhanced OPACs have become a popular solution. Enhanced OPACs are those in which a digital image, text file, or finding aid is attached electronically to the MARC record (see Fig. 1). For the purposes of this research, a finding aid is different from an index, it is a document that provides a comprehensive overview of a collection’s scope

and content and places the material in a historical context. Lambert in particular describes the merits of digitization over the exclusivity of the MARC record: “Catalogue records on their own are arid means of finding a particular item or information about an item. But coupled with a digital image, they come alive.”⁴⁵ A digital image may very well be a digital copy of the original item, but may also be an OCR file or photo of a three-dimensional object. Finding aids are mentioned specifically in the literature: Stanley discovered that the Historical Society of Pennsylvania materials used the most are those with finding aids attached to the main catalog.⁴⁶

Figure 1: Sample Integrated OPAC Record, with EAD Finding Aid

The screenshot displays an OPAC record for "Louis Decimus Rubin papers, 1945-". At the top, there are navigation tabs: Search, Advanced Search, Browse New Titles, Browse by Call Number, and Added (0). Below these is a search bar with a dropdown menu set to "Anywhere" and a "Search" button. A breadcrumb trail reads "<< Back to Search Results << 4 of 3236 >>".

The main record area includes an "Add" button and the following metadata:

- Author:** Rubin, Louis Decimus, 1923-
- Language:** English
- Format:** Archival Materials
- Summary:** Papers of Louis Decimus Rubin, Jr., of Chapel Hill, N.C., educator, literary critic, scholar, novelist, journalist, editor, and publisher. Rubin was professor of English at Hollins College and the Un... (see more)

On the right side, there are utility options: Email, Print, Text Message, Export To: (with a "Select" dropdown), and Request this title (2-3 business days).

Below the metadata, there are tabs for Description, Location, Summary, MARC, and Full Record. The "Location" tab is active, showing an "Online Access" link for "Finding aid". A table below lists the location details:

Location	Call #	Status	Notes
Southern Historical Collection	3899 Series 1.1.1 O-T	Available (library use only)	

Lambert goes further and suggests that all attempts to fit ephemera to AACR2 standards in MARC format should be scrapped, and an entirely new, web-based record adopted.⁴⁷ A web-based record, in the confines of this research, is the metadata accompanying a digital item, be it an image, OCR, or other type of computer file. The

goal, as Lambert sees it, should be effective cross-searching, made possible by common minimum fields: first line or title, names, date, subjects, etc.⁴⁸

Dwindling or nonexistent resources is a pernicious barrier to integrated OPACs, however. Stanley remarks that the HSP would like to do item-level cataloging and take advantage of new technology such as integrated finding aids, but currently does not have the resources.⁴⁹ As a result, the ephemera at the HSP will be treated archivally, and will “require the researcher to engage in some creative browsing.”⁵⁰ Foley wrote that full cataloging for each item of ephemera in a collection is a luxury.⁵¹ Full cataloging, item-level cataloging, scanning ephemera, running OCR software, and creating EAD finding aids all take a large amount of time and money in terms of training, man hours, and sustainability. For institutions without the resources to spare, this type of strategy is impossible.

These trends have implications for access. Lambert touches on this briefly by discussing cross-referencing of catalog records. “This is, for me, the *raison d’être* of cataloguing,” she writes.⁵² The point of cataloging is to provide access. The joy in cataloging is forging connections among collections and records, thus making access easy. The only way, currently, the profession does this is through standard cataloging and description processes and agreed-upon nomenclature. As the trends related above testify, there is no such standardization when it comes to cataloging ephemera.

ACCESS

Access is the most important issue facing institutions with ephemera collections. As stated above, uncataloged and unprocessed special collections materials continue to grow, and information professionals seem ill-equipped to handle the influx.

One cannot discuss collections backlog in the twenty-first century without also discussing the hugely influential work by Greene and Meissner, “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing.”⁵³ Greene and Meissner lament “The existing archival culture [that] seems deeply rooted in an implicit belief that every item in twentieth-century collections is so precious that each must be scrutinized for paper clips that might damage a word.”⁵⁴ To combat this they advocate that we “change the way we process so that we can, with our existing resources, roughly triple the speed with which we process.”⁵⁵ The ARL Special Collections Task Force mentioned above studied the Greene and Meissner approach in its research,⁵⁶ and as a result, in 2005, 37 repositories began testing the Greene and Meissner approach by processing collections according to their theory.⁵⁷

A few years prior to the formation of the ARL Special Collections Task Force and the publication of “More Product, Less Process,” David H. Stam of Syracuse University was advocating the same sort of philosophy. Stam’s thesis is that access is more important than preservation: “[Special collections] must get their precious treasures and scholarly ephemera into the sometimes dirty hands of potential users, must place a higher priority on access to unprocessed material...”⁵⁸ Stam means the democratization of the scholarly library; however, his ideas run parallel to those of Greene and Meissner when it comes to processing. For most acquired materials, access is the desired result, not necessarily preservation. In Stam’s words, “Preservation for posterity impedes utility to the present: we have to ask whether the balance between use and protection is out of kilter.”⁵⁹

A suggestion that has not made a huge showing in the literature, but which is significant all the same, is collaboration among repositories. Different types of collaboration could benefit access to ephemera collections, such as sharing the burden of designing universal guidelines for the cataloging and description of ephemera, sharing collection holdings, and sharing research about processing priorities. In a decade in which digital alliances (Calisphere, NC ECHO, and state initiatives such as NCLive and GALILEO to name a few) grow more numerous every day, it is surprising that this point is not stronger in the literature. Johnson and Snyder are the only authors to discuss collaboration at length. In 1991 the Coalition Planning Group (Harvard Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, NYPL Dance Collection, and the San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum) was formed in order to address access problems. The Planning Group resulted in the Dance Heritage Coalition (DHC), an NEH funded project.⁶⁰ Among many notable achievements, the DHC developed coordinated processing guidelines, and now coordinates a union catalog of dance materials and supervises NACO submissions.

Ephemera is so complex – “schizophrenic” as Stanley writes⁶¹ -- that the more access points one has the better. Access points are mentioned in much of the literature, particularly by Hadley and Marcum.⁶² Both recognize that cataloging is a rapidly changing concept. Marcum mentions that we know from “many studies” that students go to Google first because it is easier than navigating library websites and databases.⁶³ It is not such a far leap to then assume that whatever library materials available via Google as well as the OPAC will get more use than materials which are only available through the OPAC.

Is ephemera merely lying in wait for the profession to develop the right technology? It seems that way to Lambert and Barnhill. As stated before, Lambert believes digitization is the way to best exploit printed ephemera. Barnhill cites evidence from several repositories with digital ephemera collection that conclude the best way to improve access to ephemera collections is to mount web-based records.⁶⁴ For example, at the American Antiquarian Society, readers began asking to see originals after starting to catalog nineteenth century American broadsides.⁶⁵

Though the literature is replete with case studies (e.g. Stanley, Organ, Wrighting, Copeland et. al, etc.), there was a noticeable lack of information about what the average repository is doing with their ephemera collections. The closest the profession has come to expressing this is Lawrence's 1972 survey and Akeroyd and Benedict's 1973 directory, of which cataloging was not even the focus. It is commendable that librarians such as the team at Pennsylvania State University have gone to so much trouble to try and codify some procedures for ephemera cataloging, but to what end if the profession does not have an accurate picture of what the cataloging landscape is, right now? The research done here is an attempt at just that. Now that we have figured out what the profession says we *should* be doing, we will see what we are *actually* doing.

Methodology

There are no current surveys of cataloging practices among repositories collecting ephemera. This is a problem because there exists no context in which to place case studies, of which there are many. The Pennsylvania State librarians may have an exceptional solution to the problems with MARC cataloging, but how many repositories are using MARC for ephemera cataloging in the first place? So much of the literature is devoted to the cause of providing format and genre access points for ephemera records, but there is precious little proof that it isn't being done. For the profession to have any hope of developing any sort of cohesive plan for ephemera cataloging, it must first examine what is and is not being done.

To assess the situation as it exists at the beginning of 2009, seven repositories were selected (subdivisions are specific ephemera collections found at these repositories):

- The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Ephemera Collection
- Long Island University (LIU), C.W. Post Library Special Collections and Archives
 - Joseph Cameron Cross Theatre Collection, Circus and Buffalo Bill Collection, Original Movie Poster Research Collection, and the Catalog of WWII Movie Posters
- National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ) Ephemera Collection
- San Diego State University (SDSU) Library Special Collections
 - *Printed Works*: Radical Ephemera/Underground Publications Collection, Jane Adams Recipe and Menu Collection
 - *Manuscript and Ephemera Collection*: American Society for Aesthetics, Barbara Abele Bookplate Collection, Lida Brodenova Papers, Robert Eliot Smith Papers, and The Peoples Temple Collection

- State Library of Western Australia (SLWA) Ephemera Collection
- University of Washington (UW) University Library
 - Vietnam War Era Ephemera Collection
- Washington State Historical Society (WSHS) Ephemera Collection

Criteria for inclusion in this study involved two options. The sample set of libraries were initially chosen for meeting one of two criteria. First, they were mentioned by name in the literature discussed in previous sections. Second, they appeared on a Google search for “ephemera collection.” For any library to be in the sample, the cataloging system must be apparent to the viewer, i.e., there is a PDF file to view, or the MARC record is available. The criteria eliminated ten repositories out of an initial sample of seventeen. Size, location, type of cataloging system or software, print or non-print material, or type of repository were not factors in the decision to include or exclude a repository in the sample.

Analysis

The terms in the literature review dictated the analysis. As mentioned above, the literature focused on three things: the difficulty of cataloging ephemera, different methods people had come up with to catalog ephemera, and the importance of access points, particularly main entry information and genre/format information. A large part of this analysis was determining whether or not the cataloging systems used provide adequate access. For this research, adequate access is achieved when the user can identify the material, find information about its existence and location in the catalog, and know how to obtain the item or a copy of it.⁶⁶

The sample repositories were examined in three stages. This design helped achieve the research goal of identifying current trends in ephemera cataloging. The three stages are outlined below:

Stage 1 determined what cataloging system was utilized. Options included MARC, web-based records, digital galleries, indices, inventories, finding aids, or EAD finding aids. Once this was determined, the repository's cataloging system was classified according to its type. Four types are represented in the sample: MARC, indices, web-based records, and finding aids.

In **Stage 2** records were extracted from each sample repository. For library catalogs, the process was straightforward. Each catalog* was searched by keyword. In all cases a broad keyword search for "ephemera" was done, and, if necessary, also a subject keyword or descriptive keyword search for "ephemera." Other types of cataloging systems were simply scrutinized for separate record units. Records were extracted by simple cut-and-paste into separate document and labeled with the date of extraction, name of the repository, and any other information about the record that might be of use.

In order to be considered for this research, records must be ephemera according to classic definitions, i.e., printed ephemera defined by Makepeace, or non-print ephemera defined by Young.⁶⁷ The types of records chosen conformed to one or more of four criteria. First, the records used were often the first returned results. When a search for "ephemera" returned 785 to 5393 records, it was simpler to take a record at the beginning rather than sort through the entire list. Second, some records used were examples of different formats. For instance, with the State Library of Western Australia, records for a collection, a newspaper supplement, a leaflet, a brochure, and a catalog were specifically

Table 1: Sample Repositories and Records Extracted

Repository	Search Type	Keyword	Returned Results	Extracted Records	Date of Search
AIATSIS	words and phrases	ephemera	22 titles	5	Feb. 6, 2009
	words and phrases	ephemera	23 titles		Mar. 28, 2009
LIU	keyword	ephemera	none	7	Feb. 6, 2009
	subject keyword	ephemera	none		Feb. 6, 2009
	subject keyword	printed ephemera	none		Feb. 6, 2009
NLNZ	broad keyword	ephemera	785 records	6	Feb. 6, 2009
	broad keyword	ephemera	790 records		Mar. 27, 2009
	descriptive keyword	ephemera	222 records		Feb. 6, 2009
	descriptive keyword	menu	179 records		Feb. 6, 2009
SLWA	keyword	ephemera	5293 results	7	Feb. 6, 2009
	keyword	ephemera	5393 results		Mar. 29, 2009
SDSU	n/a†	n/a	n/a	11	Feb. 6, 2009
UW	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	Feb. 6, 2009
WSHS	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	Feb. 6, 2009

†Not applicable because the SDSU records used had specific links to the OPAC, so there was no need to search.

UW and WSHS: Only concerned with the digital collection records and metadata.

*The NLNZ catalog was offered more search options than others, so the keyword “menu” was tried just to see what would happen. Conversely, LIU was much less searchable than others, so much so that the keyword “printed ephemera” was tried in case “ephemera” was not used at all.

chosen because they demonstrated different format cataloging. Third, collection and item level records were both extracted. The fourth criterion concerned the researcher’s discretion – sometimes the records were chosen simply because they were interesting. The only exclusion criteria for records found by this process were for materials that did not fit the classic definition of ephemera mentioned above. For example, many monographs about ephemera and its collection and study were retrieved.

Stage 3 involved making comparisons of the information in the extracted records. As mentioned before, an important strategy for achieving adequate access mentioned in the literature review is the use of as many access points as possible – specifically, main entry information and genre/format information.

At this point the records were parsed in order to compare the parts expressing main entry and genre/format information. Specific elements sought were the 655 genre/format field and the 100 names and 245 title fields in MARC records, scope and content in finding aids, and any corresponding elements such as “Title” or “Object Type” in indices or web-based records.

Findings

What Types of Cataloging Systems are Being Used?

Finding aids, indices, MARC, and web-based records are ephemera cataloging strategies identified in the literature review. Four out of the seven repositories studied here used MARC for cataloging their ephemera collections. Thus MARC, at 57%, was the most often used cataloging strategy. The second most often used strategy; with three out of seven (42%) repositories were web-based records. Indices and finding aids both garnered two out of seven, or 28% each. For a summary of these findings, see Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Cataloging Strategies Used by Sample Repositories

Cataloging Strategy	Repositories	Percentage out of 7
MARC	AIATSIS, NLNZ, SLWA, SDSU	57%
Web-based record	WSHS, LIU, UW	42%
Index	AIATSIS, LIU	28%
Finding Aid	SDSU, LIU	28%

As expected, most repositories used more than one type of cataloging strategy. Particularly with finding aids, one expects to find some sort of summary record, MARC or otherwise. In other cases there was more than one type of collection at the same institution. SDSU and LIU are good examples. SDSU did not keep a single ephemera

collection, like many of the other repositories. Instead, it had “Printed Works” and “Manuscript and Ephemera” collections.⁶⁸ Samples of ephemera exist in both. The Printed Works collection contained the Jane Adams Recipe and Menu collection, with a finding aid and a MARC record. LIU employs three different cataloging strategies at its repository: the Original Movie Poster Research Collection has an index as well as a finding aid, the Circus and Buffalo Bill Collections is a digital collection with web-based records, and the Joseph Cameron Cross Theatre Collection and the Catalog of WWII Movie Posters are both indices.

The repositories using MARC records were very similar in method. All use USMARC.⁶⁹ Considering the reservation about MARC discussed above, it is interesting that 57% of the repositories studied created MARC records for their ephemera collections. Looking back at Table #, using the genre keyword “ephemera” was successful at finding plenty of records. However, not a single repository in this study made use of the 655 Genre/form field. The closest any repository came was the SLWA. In that cataloging system, “650 x0 Printed Ephemera” was a field in each ephemera record in its system.

In contrast, the way web-based records are used for description varied wildly. LIU has a striking variety of collections described with web-based records. The Circus and Buffalo Bill Collection is a small collection of digitized items presented in a very simple html format – a table with an image and a label. The Original Movie Poster Research Collection, however, is an enormous collection of digitized images. The poster images are organized alphabetically by movie title as well as by genre. Though the metadata is minimal compared to a fully-fleshed bibliographic record, this collection has a link to the

Internet Movie Database entry for each movie represented, presumably to add value to the collection.

In comparison, UW and the WSHS use CONTENTdm – a database software that is currently very popular among libraries for showcasing digital images and finding aids. The web-based records here are digitized images of posters, handbills, political tracts, newsletters, and pamphlets, accompanied by metadata such as title, creator, place of publication, date, and physical description. The metadata is based on Dublin Core elements, and thus much more extensive and standardized than the records at LIU.

Two repositories, AIATSIS and LIU, are using indices. The AIATSIS has one large (95 pages) PDF file as an index to its ephemera collection. And as mentioned above, LIU has indices for the Joseph Cameron Cross Theatre Collection and the Catalog of WWII Movie Posters.

The following tables and figures are arranged by cataloging strategy: MARC, index, web-based records, and finding aid. Sample main entry and genre/format information from extracted records are arranged according to the repository to which the record belongs, and by field or tag information. A discussion of each table follows.

MARC

Table 3 illustrates the application the MARC format in four of the sample repositories. Similarities include putting collection titles in square brackets⁷⁰ and the inclusion of a genre/format term. Differences include the treatment of main entry information and the type of genre/format information included in each record.

The treatment of the main entry information at the four repositories represented in Table 3 differs in terms of putting the 245 field in square brackets and the inclusion of the

Table 3: MARC Formatting Samples

MARC				
Fields	Repository			
	AIATSIS	NLNZ	SDSU	SLWA
Parent	n/a	Clark, Laurence (Klarc) 1949- : New Zealand Herald cartoons. 1 - 31 July 1993 [Menus, mainly for celebratory dinners. 1910-1919].	n/a	n/a
Child	n/a	Roo steaks on menu - News; I think I'll have the humble pie 1 July 1993 8? Souvenir of the opening of the Marble Bar, Manners Street, Wellington...Friday 29th September, 1916. Marble Bar Menu. 1916.	n/a	n/a
110	n/a	n/a	n/a	110 1 Western Australia. bHealth Dept. 110 2 Canning Vale Weaving Mills. 110 2 Hobby Ceramics Teachers Association of Western Australia.
245	245 [Ephemera collection] 245 [Scrapbook of ephemera relating to productions of Jack Davis' play The dreamers] h[manuscript] 245 Weet-Bix "The world of the Aborigine": b1969 card series 245 [Two greeting cards / cproduced by Federal Council for Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders]	n/a	245 00 Jane Adams recipe and menu collection, f1920-1959 245 00 Robert Eliot Smith papers, f1929-1983	245 10 Exhibition catalogue : Computer 89 : April 27-29 1989. 245 10 Austral : bcelebrating 20 years 1988 - 2008 245 10 [Collection of material relating to the locality of Cape Leveque] 245 10 [Collection of material relating to Graduate Tax]
505	Badges -- Bags: cloth, plastic -- Banners -- Bookmarks -- Boomerangs -- Brochures [etc]	n/a	n/a	n/a
520	Scrapbook of memorabilia relating to Jack Davis' play 'The dreamers'. Mainly press clippings, theatre programs. Also includes photocopies of advertisements, photographs, invitation, posters. [etc]	n/a	n/a	n/a
690	Art -- Ephemera	n/a	n/a	n/a
650 x0	n/a	n/a	Menus vSpecimens Recipes vSpecimens	Printed Ephemera
Image Type	n/a	Posters, Ephemera Greeting Cards Cartoons (Commentary) Ephemera, Menus	n/a	n/a
Media	n/a	Letterpress works Photolithographs	n/a	n/a

100 and/or 110 field(s). The AIATSIS, NLNZ, SLWA, and SDSU each put the title of collection level records in square brackets, though the NLNZ does not appear to be as consistent in this practice as the other repositories. All records containing a personal or corporate name were exclusively confined to the SLWA. As illustrated by Table 3, corporate names far outweigh personal names.

In addition, SDSU does not appear to have item level (individual pieces of ephemera cataloged separately) MARC records for collections containing ephemera. However, many of the collections are treated archivally in terms of description. For example, the Jane Adams Recipe and Menu Collection is clearly an ephemera collection, however this library has chosen to treat it in a traditionally archival manner. The record contains notes such as the 524 Preferred Citation, 540 Copyright, and 545 Biographical/historical notes. In another example, the Robert Eliot Smith Papers *contain* ephemera, but the collection is an archival collection: it is called “papers” and arranged according to archival principles.

Another difference apparent in examining MARC records is each repository assigns their collections or items a genre/format term, but no two are alike. For example, the NLNZ uses “Image Type” and “Media” to indicate the genre and format, respectively. The SLWA and SDSU both use the 650 Topical Term to indicate genre and format. While SLWA merely appends “650 x0 Printed Ephemera” to every ephemera record, however, SDSU applies a specific genre term with subfield “v Specimens” to every ephemera record. The AIATSIS goes a step further when assigning genre terms. The AIATSIS has an in-house thesaurus called “Pathways.” According to the AIATSIS website, “Pathways contains headings for place names, language groups and people, and

subjects relating to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. These headings are used to describe all items held in the AIATSIS Catalog.” For the term *ephemera*, the preferred term is “Art – ephemera,” and the single narrower term is “Art – ephemera – cards/postcards.” In the sample included in Table #, we can see the AIATSIS thesaurus at work.

Overall, the repositories using MARC seem to have a clear idea of the information necessary to for the records to fulfill their roles as surrogates for the primary information.

The differences in MARC stem from approach – each repository treats it differently. Some treat it archivally, like Greenberg has suggested in the literature review, and as many some case studies from the literature near out. Others treat it as a library would, as though they were using MARC to describe monographs. The choices of controlled vocabulary also differ (e.g. collection, papers, printed ephemera, etc.). The issue of main entry (what is it for ephemera?) and lack of consensus on access terms continue to be problematic in this cataloging strategy.

INDEX

The following figures (Fig. 2, Fig.3, and Fig.4) illustrates the application of an index at two of the sample repositories. The most striking aspect of these indices is their dissimilarity. Though both repositories have started with a simple inventory and enhanced it by categorical arrangement, their methods of description and access are totally different.

<p><u>Art – auctions, sales, advertising</u></p> <p><i>Christies South Yarra, Vic</i> Fine Aboriginal art – Sydney Auction [12 October 2003]</p>
<p><u>Containers</u></p> <p><i>Bags</i></p> <p>AEEDB : Aboriginal Employment Education Development Branch [Adelaide: South Australia] [Plastic bag 34 cm x 40 cm. AEEDB logo on black background]</p> <p>Arunta Art Gallery : native paintings, art materials, books : Todd St Alice Springs [paper bag 32 cm x 25 cm]</p>
<p><u>Health and safety</u></p> <p><i>Carers ACT</i> Indigenous family carers: practical help & support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers in the ACT [leaflet]</p> <p>Join the fight against cervical cancer : I did [2007] [Postcard with photo of Tania Major 2007 Young Australian of the Year]</p>

Figure 2: Sample categories and items from AIATSIS index.

<p>Miscellaneous Items</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Folded note on The Merchants Bank letterhead. Dated April 22 1898. Includes newspaper clipping. 17 lines. 2. List of actors and the shows they appeared in. 3 double-sided pages. 56 actors listed. 3. Song lyrics for "That Fifth Avenue Rag" by Carl Randall. Dated week of March 31st, 1912. 4. Newspaper clipping from The Rochester Herald theatre section. Dated Wednesday October 8, 1924. 5. Newspaper cartoon of Olive Oliver as Ulysses. 6. Catalogue clipping featuring a mention of John Gielgud and his photo. 7. Black and white German newspaper graphic of a house and people. 8. "The Ice Lady Cometh" newspaper article which discusses Sonja Henie's ice show. 9. "The Truth About Patriotism" newspaper article by Howard Whitman. 10. Glossy copy of part of The Boston Museum. Dates and plays mentioned: Monday, August 27th, 1888 "The Bells of Haslemere" and Monday, September 10, 1888 "Little Lord Fauntleroy" 11. Small note from Portia Thais. 12. Address titled "Come to Life Americans." Dated 1950 by Frank Hitchcock. Typed. 31 lines. 13. Bronx Opera House playbill for "Peg O' My Heart"

Figure 3: Sample folder list from the Joseph Cameron Cross Theatre Collection at LIU

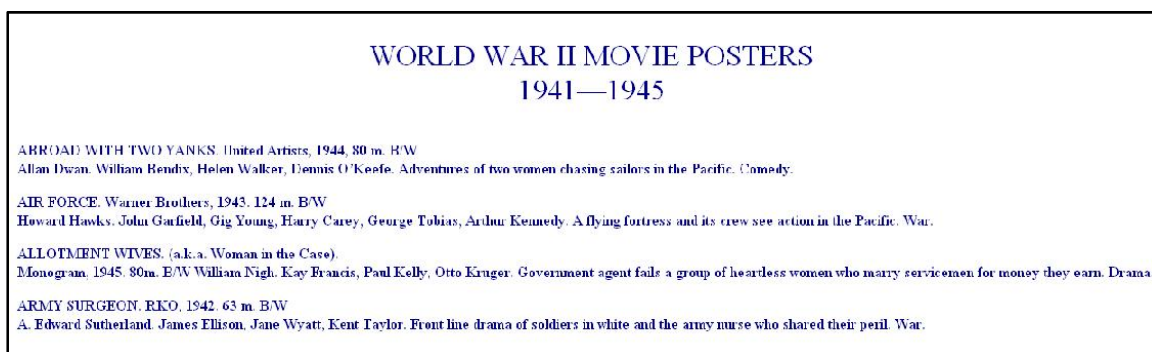


Figure 4: Sample item list from World War II Movie poster collection at LIU

Since the samples here are indices, there is no set field label for main entry information (a simple title or category in these cases), and the lack of set fields for main entry and genre/format information affects access in different ways. Conspicuously absent from the indices is genre/format information. Though there is no set genre/format field, one can still search by format. In the case of LIU (Figs. 3 and 4), while there is no specific genre/format field, tag, box, etc. other than the description listed on the website, we know that we are dealing with movie posters, playbills, song lyrics, etc. The situation is the same at the AIATSIS: some of the categories into which the index is organized are formats (e.g. containers, postcard, and paper bag – see Fig. 2). Therefore one can search and browse by format. The same cannot be said for main entry information. With the exception of the Joseph Cameron Cross Theatre Collection at LIU (Fig. 3), the items in each index are listed by title. If there were no other descriptive information available, it would be impossible to discover the format of each item in these indices. As we will discover, however, the main entry information in these indices does not exist in a vacuum, and the AIATSIS and LIU have added descriptive information to many items.

The AIATSIS index is arranged in broad subject and format categories with smaller subcategories indicated in italics. The titles of ephemera appear to be transcribed directly from the material itself. For example, an item in Fig. 2 – “Join the fight against cervical cancer: I did” – is a single item title. Very little genre or format information can be gleaned from that. However, the AIATSIS adds descriptive information to most records in square brackets. Thus, we know that the item “Join the fight against cervical cancer: I did” is a postcard, “with photo of Tania Major 2007 Young Australian of the Year.”

There are several simple indices at LIU. Represented in Figs. 3 and 4 are items from the “Miscellaneous Items” list from the Archives of the Joseph Cameron Cross Theatre Collection and several items from the Catalog of WWII Movie Posters. The collection record titles are straight-forward and descriptive, though the term “miscellaneous items” is perhaps overused when referring to ephemera. The item records for the Theatre collection (Fig. 3) are fascinating – the processor literally described exactly what they saw. In contrast, the items from the movie poster collection are the title of the movie – the titles of the item record do not describe the item. From these examples, it is obvious that LIU does not have a consistent method for handling ephemera.

WEB-BASED RECORDS

Table 4 (see page 36) illustrates the application of web-based record formatting at three of the sample repositories. Both UW and the WSHS use CONTENTdm, and thus Dublin Core metadata. There are three digital collections at LIU represented here: The

Original Movie Poster Research Collection, The Circus Images, and The Buffalo Bill Images. None use CONTENTdm or any other content management software. All collections have digital images. The records shown here are similar in that titles for item records come from the physical items. Differences include metadata schema and genre/format descriptions.

The item records for these web-based records are different from many main entry examples in Table 3 and some item records in Figs. 2-4. In these examples, the main entry information is descriptive. For example:

- 245 [Scrapbook of ephemera relating to productions of Jack Davis' play The dreamers]]h[manuscript] (Table 3, AIATSIIS)
- 245 10 Exhibition catalogue : Computer 89 : April 27-29 1989. (Table 3, SLWA)
- 245 10 [Collection of material relating to the locality of Cape Leveque] (Table 3, SLWA)
- 3. Song lyrics for "That Fifth Avenue Rag" by Carl Randall. Dated week of March 31st, 1912. (Fig. 3, LIU)
- 13. Bronx Opera House playbill for "Peg O' My Heart" (Fig. 3, LIU)

In the above examples, the cataloger or processor has portrayed the item in their own words. With the web-based record samples, the reverse is true. The main entry information has been transcribed directly from the item itself. For example:

- All Automobiles Will be Destroyed (UW)
- Annie Oakley (LIU)
- William Milnor Roberts (WSHS)

Scanning through The Circus Images collection (which consists of only 12 images), few exceptions to this transcription process can be found. Exceptions do occur, however. For example, the following three titles have no corresponding texts on the images to which they refer: "Circus Elephant and Trainer," "P.T. Barnum – Caricature," "P.T. Barnum

signature, 1884.” It is unknown why these three are the exception. Nevertheless, transcription appears to be the rule for web-based records.

Table 4: Web-based formatting samples

WEB-BASED			
Fields	Repository		
	LIU	UW	WSHS
Collection	Original Movie Poster Research Collection, 1940-1962 The Circus Images The Buffalo Bill Images	Vietnam War Era Ephemera Collection	Washington State Historical Society Ephemera Collection
Item	Ace in the Hole. [aka: The Big Carnival] Rashomon. Strangers on a Train. The Old Time Circus, Drawings by John Wolcott Adams Nineteenth Century French Circus Poster Annie Oakley Buffalo Bill & First American Indians Visiting Venice	All Automobiles Will be Destroyed Welton Armstead Murdered by Seattle Pigs	A Blow to the Axis The Northern Pacific Railroad; its land grant, resources, traffic, and tributary country. Valley route to the Pacific William Milnor Roberts
Object Type	n/a	Flier Pamphlet	Poster, political Pamphlet Carte de visite
No tag	Caricature Drawings Poster	n/a	n/a

UW and the WSHS use Dublin Core, while LIU uses a home-grown metadata schema, when there is metadata to be found. The digital collections at LIU are predominately collections of images with very little genre/format information for each. The Original Movie Poster Research Collection, for example, is obviously a collection of posters, but individual records give no information about the poster itself. Instead, information about the movie is given. We can see from the example below, taken from the Original Movie Poster Research Collection, the metadata for poster:

Title: Rashomon.

Information: RKO, 1951. 80m. b/w.

Description: In medieval Japan, four people have different versions of a violent incident involving a bandit's attack on a nobleman.

ACADEMY AWARDS: *Best Foreign Language Film.*

As mentioned in the previous section, LIU does not have a cohesive process for handling ephemera, and yet another example exists here in this metadata. The metadata scheme illustrated here appears to be home-grown: designed for this particular collection, perhaps based on the needs and wants of the typical user of this collection. This collection's users may be more interested in information about the film than information about the poster. For information about the posters themselves, one must go to the collection finding aid abstract: "The Original Movie Poster Collection contains more than 6,000 Original Movie Posters dating from 1940 - 1962. Scope includes posters in two sizes: 24" x 28" and 36" x 14"."⁷¹ In contrast, the collections at UW and the WSHS contain a wealth of genre/format information, including an "Object Type" tag for each record. These tags are searchable through a single mouse-click, identical to an OPAC keyword search. The tags appear to be based on the Art and Architecture Thesaurus – there is not enough information included at either the UW or the WSHS websites to conclude what vocabulary they are using.

In terms of adequate access, web-based records are very effective. Of all the cataloging strategies studied herein, web-based records have the most potential for cross-referencing capabilities and access point versatility. However, unless one is using CONTENTdm or another system based on Dublin Core elements, standardization lags behind a strategy such as finding aids.

Table 5: Finding Aid Formatting Samples

FINDING AID		
Fields	Repository	
	LIU	SDSU
Collection	Original Movie Poster Collection	Inventory of the Radical Ephemera/Underground Publications Collection, 1966-1983 [Box] Miscellany, Memorabilia Jane Adams Recipe and Menu Collection, 1920-1959 Series 3: Menus Barbara Abele Bookplate Collection, 1915-1998 Series I, Bookplates by Subject Robert Eliot Smith Papers, 1929-1983 Series 6: Miscellany Peoples Temple [Box] Transcripts
Item	ADVENTURES OF ROBINSON CRUSOE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS	"MRU: medical resistance union," Sep 1968, 12 page booklet United Prisoners Union Bill of Rights, no date (2 copies) Folder 50: Alaska- Cruise Folder 10: Michigan-Detroit Folder 17: Unknown Locations Animals Armorial Heraldic Seals Folder 3: Miscellaneous Miscellaneous Jim Jones phone call with David Kahn White Night, berating Children of Jonestown debate issues Last will
Scope and Content	6,000+ Original Movie Posters dating from 1940 - 1962 in two sizes: 24" x 28" and 36" x 14".	The collection consists of newspapers, newspaper clippings, periodicals, newsletters, booklets, flyers and handouts, monographs, and one poster. The collection includes correspondence, awards, travel accounts, opera and recital programs, clippings, photographs, diaries, postcards, reviews, scrapbooks, photo albums, tape and phono recordings. This collection contains audiotape transcripts and summaries, audiotapes, photocopies of original unclassified documents from the federal government (on paper and also on other formats, including microfilm, microfiche, and compact disk), and newspaper and magazine articles related to the Peoples Temple Christian Church and the Peoples Temple Agricultural Settlement at Jonestown, Guyana.
Formats /Genres	n/a	Publications

FINDING AID

Table 5 illustrates the application of finding aid record formatting at two of the sample repositories. The two repositories represented in Table 5 have finding aids based on *Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)*. These finding aids differ in how strictly they adhere to *DACS* principles when structuring collection and item record titles, as well as when providing genre/format information. However, this strategy has by far the best samples of standardization among main entry and genre/format information than any other strategy studied herein.

Though the finding aid for the Original Movie Poster Collection at LIU is more loosely based on *DACS* than that of SDSU, it still effective as a comprehensive description of the collection's scope and content. The Original Movie Poster Collection at LIU has a finding aid attached to each genre of movie (action/adventure, science fiction, biography, drama, romance, etc.). This finding aid appears loosely based on *DACS* principles. For example, in the "Action and Adventure" finding aid, the extent, or "Quantity" of this collection is "6000+" (see Fig. 6). *DACS* suggests finding aids express extent in two parts, a number and an express of material type. In this example "6000+" provides a numerical amount but there is nothing to indicate the material type. It may be that the processors felt this was implicit – the title of the collection is Original Movie *Poster* Collection, after all – but the lack of this second piece of the extent element indicates that *DACS* was not strictly followed. The finding aid also contains an Abstract as well as a Scope and Content Note. While not proscribed by *DACS*, the Abstract could be a brief summary of the Scope and Content as well as biographical information for

Collection Finding Aid:	
Benefactors:	The Original Movie Poster Research Collection is comprised of 6,000+ movie posters given to Special Collections in two separate donations by Frederick Adler in 1972 and 1974, and Philip Sills in 1972.
Genre:	Action and Adventure
Time Period:	1940 - 1962
Abstract:	The Original Movie Poster Collection contains more than 6,000 Original Movie Posters dating from 1940 - 1962. Scope includes posters in two sizes: 24" x 28" and 36" x 14".
Quantity:	6,000+
Collection Number:	GAA01
Location:	Special Collections Main Room
Repository:	Special Collections. E. Davis Schwartz Memorial Library, C. W. Post Campus Long Island University, Brookville, NY 11548
Scope and Content:	6,000+ Original Movie Posters dating from 1940 - 1962 in two sizes: 24" x 28" and 36" x 14".
User Restrictions:	The Collection is available for viewing in the Special Collections' Reading Room. Requests for digital images are considered on a case by case basis. Please call or email us for an appointment: 516/299-2880 and Conrad.Schoeffling@liu.edu .

Figure 5: Finding Aid for Original Movie Poster Collection, LIU

“presentation purposes to enhance resource discovery.”⁷² In contrast, the Abstract is almost identical to the Scope and Content note and contains no biographical information. The important information for adequate access, however, is present in this finding aid.

Seven collections with finding aids from SDSU are represented here. SDSU is part of the Online Archive of California (OAC), which hosts EAD finding aids. OAC has its own set of description standards, the *OAC Best Practices Guidelines for Encoded Archival Description*.⁷³ These finding aids are much more aligned with *DACS* principles for the simple reason that *Best Practices* is based upon them. Fig. 7 shows an example of a typical finding aid. This record has standard elements such as “Administrative Information” as well as the proper form of the extent element.

OAC
ONLINE ARCHIVE OF CALIFORNIA [OAC Home](#) | [About](#) | [Search](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Help](#)

[Finding Aids](#) > [San Diego State University](#) > [Special Collections](#)

Inventory of the Radical Ephemera/Underground Publications Collection, 1966-1983

View options:
[Standard](#)
[Entire finding aid](#)

Search within this document:

Contents:
[Descriptive Summary](#)
[Administrative Information](#)
[Scope and Content](#)
[Container List](#)
[OVERSIZE](#)
[Posters:](#)
[Newspapers:](#)
[OTHER PUBLICATIONS, EPHEMERA](#)
[Newsletters:](#)
[Magazines, journals:](#)
[Miscellany, Memorabilia:](#)

Descriptive Summary

Title:
 Radical Ephemera/Underground Publications Collection, 1966-1983

Collection number:
 NSD-9

Extent:
 2 linear feet

Repository:
[Malcolm A. Love Library](#)
[San Diego State University](#)
[San Diego, California 92182-8050](#)

Language:
 English.

Figure 6: Finding Aid for Inventory of the Radical Ephemera/Underground Publications Collection, SDSU

DACS is the archival world's answer to standardization – it supersedes *Archives*, *Personal Papers*, and *Manuscripts* as a cataloging standard and it is compliant with AACR2. A finding aid as a descriptive format can be versatile and is designed to be comprehensive. As an ephemera cataloging strategy, LIU and SDSU seem to have combined the best of the archival and library worlds for the benefit of ephemera description.

Conclusion

Part of the purpose of the study was to answer the following questions: What cataloging strategies are currently being used by repositories, and how effective are these techniques in terms of access?

After studying these seven repositories, it is clear that most repositories are using MARC as a cataloging strategy. It is also clear that the features offered by the online landscape are being taken advantage of, if only in a nascent sense. Only a small percentage (28%) of repositories were using indices and finding aids. No other cataloging strategies were noted.

As far as effectiveness was determined, the most effective strategies for delivering adequate access are MARC and finding aids. The reasoning for this is that both provide a level of standardization lacking in the other strategies. As proved in the literature review, standardization is very important to the profession.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

This study concentrated on finding widespread use of genre/format information, evidence of standardization in main entry information, as well as a snapshot of ephemera cataloging practices among ephemera collecting repositories. Some standard method of constructing main entry information was found, as well as a surprisingly frequent use of standardized genre/format headings. Despite the literature's divided loyalties to MARC, four out of seven repositories used it for their ephemera category. Most surprising were the variety of web-based records and the occurrence of indices for ephemera cataloging.

The goal of this research was to provide institutions struggling with ephemera description with detailed information on current practices to assess their own collections and compare them to the current trends in cataloging and ephemera processing. The following are recommendations for just such repositories.

Recommendations

1. Seriously consider format over main entry.

As mentioned in the Findings, main entry information can be placed into one of two categories: transcriptive or descriptive. Both types accurately describe an item, but only one is effective in conveying *format* to the researcher. When searching for a monograph, it is almost a given that the item will be a codex. Thus, the title or author or even subject matter is sufficient. When searching for ephemera, the possibilities are exponentially more complicated. As has been mentioned repeatedly in this paper, format is singular in importance to the definition of ephemera. It does not seem to be enough to simply transcribe the title (if any) of the piece at hand.

A small, but unique method of identifying format appeared in the SLWA OPAC (named “Henrietta”). Each ephemera record had a corresponding icon denoting format (see Fig. 8). Besides being a simple graphical display, having a representation of format as an access point is something for future ephemera catalogers to consider.



Figure 7: Ephemera Icon in Henrietta

2. Create a consistent process for handling ephemera.

The differences between repositories – those with homogeneous cataloging schemes and those without – begs the question about institutional philosophies. Do the

repositories that have single cataloging systems represent simply a different philosophy, or perhaps more effective organization?

An excellent example of what happens when a repository does not have a standard process for handling ephemera is LIU. Access to this collection is diminished because there is no cross-referencing ability, no cohesiveness among collections, and there is no central catalog or even a comprehensive description of the ephemera holdings at this repository.

As mentioned in the literature review, dispersal is more likely to happen at a repository with no consistent method of handling ephemera. At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Stanley indicates that ephemera existed in every department of the institution, and was often duplicated. Johnson and Snyder mention the eventuality of ephemera documenting the same event filtering into different collections at the same institution.

Without a homogenous cataloging scheme there is no way to combat these problems. The philosophy to espouse is that of effective organization in order to achieve, at the very least, adequate access.

3. If resources permit, consider creating EAD finding aids to describe ephemera collections.

Barnhill's comments at the RBMS preconference included the stunning statement, "Since users of libraries today expect everything to be online, I am beginning to believe that collections without electronic access might as well not exist at all."⁷⁴ This statement

is dramatic because so many ephemera collections are *not* online – the activities of the Special Collections task force is proof of that.

Perhaps the reason ephemera has for so long defied traditional organization and description standards is because it was simply waiting for a standard technologically advanced enough to accurately handle it to come into existence. This does not mean that MARC records for ephemera are failures. On the contrary, Copeland does an excellent job proving that MARC can, indeed, be very effective at describing ephemera. However, a genre so “schizophrenic” as ephemera needs a descriptive standard equally as faceted.

The one strategy in this research that showed the most standardization, even at LIU, was finding aids. With *DACS* and *EAD*, it is possible to get the standardization desired for adequate access.

4. If time, resources, or technical skill preclude the former, MARC is still a good method.

Several times in the literature review authors stated that they wished they had the time or the resources to create item-level cataloging, or to integrate finding aids into their OPACs. In the real world, this is how libraries work: small budgets, overstretched staff. It is simply not possible to have the best all the time.

Conclusion

Philip Dick’s “kipple” motif is highly appropriate for envisioning ephemera – except for one trait. The first law of Kipple, is “Kipple drives out nonkipple.” It is true that collecting ephemera can lead very quickly to a very large collection. Case in point: Stanley’s experience at the HSP. In this respect, ephemera has everything in common

with any other material in the library. The answers for how to best process ephemera are not yet standard, and will vary from place to place. However, if an institution rethinks its methods of access, many cataloging problems can be solved.

Notes

- ¹ Philip K. Dick. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (New York: Ballantine, 1996): 65.
- ² Working Party on Ephemera, *Ephemera: The Stuff of History, Report of the Working Party on Ephemera set up by the CILIP Preservation and Conservation Panel* (Thatcham, UK: Apple Print, 2003): 10.
- ³ Michael Twyman, "The Long-Term Significance of Printed Ephemera," *RBM* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 26-27.
- ⁴ Georgia B. Barnhill, "Why Not Ephemera? The Emergence of Ephemera in Libraries," *RBM* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 134.
- ⁵ Julie Anne Lambert, "Immortalizing the Mayfly: Permanent Ephemera: An Illusion or a (Virtual) Reality?" *RBM* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 153.
- ⁶ Therese Lawrence, "Are Resource Treasures Hidden from Scholars in Our Libraries?" *Special Libraries* 64, no. 7 (July 1973): 289.
- ⁷ Nancy Hadley, "Access and Description of Visual Ephemera," *Collection Management* 25, no. 4 (2001): 39.
- ⁸ Linda Stanley, "The Stranger in Our House: Managing Ephemera at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania," *Popular Culture in Libraries* 4, no. 1 (1996): 104.
- ⁹ Richard Kolbet, "Publish & Perish: Printed Ephemera and Social History," University of Iowa Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/spec-coll/Bai/kolbet3.htm> (accessed Oct. 27, 2008): seventh paragraph.
- ¹⁰ Chris E. Makepeace, *Ephemera: A Book on its Collection, Conservation, and Use* (Brookfield, VT: Gower, 1985): 10.
- ¹¹ Timothy Young, "Evidence: Toward a Library Definition of Ephemera," *RBM* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 16.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 25.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Catherine J. Johnson and Allegra Fuller Snyder, "Access," in *Securing Our Dance Heritage: Issues in the Documentation and Preservation of Dance* (Council on Library and Information Resources, July 1999), <http://clir.org/pubs/reports/pub84/pub84.html> (accessed October 27, 2008): "Addressing the Cataloging Quandary."
- ¹⁵ Stanley, "Stranger in Our House, 99, 102.

- ¹⁶ Lynette Foley, "Control of Ephemera," *Cataloguing Australia* 15, no. 2 (June 1989): 49; Andrew Wrighting, "Cataloguing Ephemera: A Student's Project," *Catalogue & Index* 76-77 (Spring-Summer 1985): 16.
- ¹⁷ Michael Organ, "Ephemera in Archives: What to do?" *Archives and Manuscripts* 15, no. 2 (1987): 110.
- ¹⁸ Foley, "Control of Ephemera," 48.
- ¹⁹ Lawrence, "Are Resource Treasures Hidden...?" 287. Lawrence's survey consisted of 28 categories of ephemera (advertisements, trade cards, souvenirs, calendars, etc.) for which respondents could mark holding, cataloged, and not cataloged. In addition, Lawrence added four questions on the nature of access.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Richard Akeroyd and Russell Benedict, eds., "A Directory of Ephemera Collections: A National Underground Network," *Wilson Library Bulletin* 48, no. 3 (Nov. 1973): 245.
- ²² Ibid., 251.
- ²³ Ibid., 253.
- ²⁴ Enid T. Thompson, *Local History: A Handbook for the Collection, Preservation, and Use of Local History Materials* (Colorado: Englewood Public Library, 1975): 30.
- ²⁵ Organ, "Ephemera in Archives," 112.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 110.
- ²⁷ Wrighting, "Cataloguing Ephemera," 16.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 16.
- ²⁹ Organ, "Ephemera in Archives," 114.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 153-154.
- ³¹ Deborah Smith, "Intellectual Control of Ephemera – A Museum's Perspective." *Popular Culture in Libraries* 4, no. 1 (1996): 69.
- ³² Ibid., 65.
- ³³ Stanley, "Stranger in Our House," 104.
- ³⁴ Barnhill, "Why Not Ephemera?" 135.
- ³⁵ Jane Greenberg, "Subject Control of Ephemera: MARC Format Options," *Popular Culture in Libraries* 4, no. 1 (1996): 74.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 77.
- ³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “Fraktur” is a type of Pennsylvania German folk art. Baptism, marriage, and other announcements are decorated with typically domestic illustrations, such as flowers, birds, angels, or hearts. Fraktur can be printed or in manuscript form.

³⁹ Anne Copeland and others, “Cataloging and Digitizing Ephemera: One Team’s Experience with Pennsylvania German Broadsides and Fraktur,” *Library Resources & Technical Services* 50, no. 3 (July 2006): 191. Italics mine.

⁴⁰ Lambert, “Immortalizing the Mayfly,” 153.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴² ARL Special Collections Task Force, “Exposing Hidden Collections: 2003 Conference Summary,” Association of Research Libraries, http://www.arl.org/rtl/speccoll/hidden/EHC_conference_summary.shtml (accessed Feb. 5, 2009): first paragraph.

⁴³ ARL Special Collections Task Force, “Special Collections Task Force Final Status Report, 2006,” Association of Research Libraries, <http://www.arl.org/rtl/speccoll/spcolltf/status0706.shtml> (accessed Apr. 12, 2009).

⁴⁴ Council on Library and Information Resources, “2008 Award Winning Projects,” Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives, <http://clir.org/hiddencollections/awards/index.html#chs> (accessed Apr. 12, 2009).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴⁶ Stanley, “Stranger in Our House,” 102.

⁴⁷ Lambert, “Immortalizing the Mayfly,” 154.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Foley, “Control of Ephemera,” 49.

⁵² Lambert, “Immortalizing the Mayfly,” 154.

⁵³ Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Processing Approaches to Deal with Late 20th-Century Collections,” *The American Archivist*, 68 (Fall/Winter 2005): 208-263.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Society of American Archivists, “Manuscript Repositories Section Meeting: Breakout Session Summaries,” *Manuscripts Repositories Newsletter* (Fall 2005), <http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/mss/fall2005.asp#4> (accessed Mar. 23, 2009): in “Hidden Collections.” It is worth mentioning that many Task Force members had serious misgivings about the use of the Meissner-Greene approach in traditional archives.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ David H. Stam, "So What's So Special?" (address, Building on Strength: Developing an ARL Agenda for Special Collections, Brown University, Providence, RI, June 28, 2001).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Johnson and Snyder, "Formation of the Dance Heritage Commission."

⁶¹ Stanley, "Stranger in Our House," 93.

⁶² Deanna Marcum's work, "The Future of Cataloging," is not specifically about ephemera cataloging, but it is relevant to this paper.

⁶³ Deanna B. Marcum, "The Future of Cataloging" (address, EBSCO Leadership Seminar, Boston, MA, Jan. 16, 2005).

⁶⁴ Barnhill, "Why Not Ephemera?" 130-131.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 133.

⁶⁶ This definition of adequate access is based on Johnson and Fuller.

⁶⁷ This definition is a compilation of both Makepeace's and Young's definitions.

⁶⁸ The website for SDSU Special Collections, <http://scua.sdsu.edu/bookcoll.shtml>, has changed since this study in February of 2009. The data represented here was current as of this date.

⁶⁹ AUSMARC being replaced by USMARC in 1991.

⁷⁰ Clearly following AACR2 rule 1.1B1.

⁷¹ Collection Finding Aid, Original Movie Poster Research Collection 1940-1962, Special Collections, B. Davis Schwartz Memorial Library, C.W. Post Campus, Long Island University, http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/sc/posters/posters_action.htm#finding.

⁷² Society of American Archivists, *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004): 35.

⁷³ OAC Working Group Metadata Standards Subcommittee, "OAC Best Practices Guidelines for Encoded Archival Description," California Digital Library, <http://www.cdlib.org/inside/diglib/guidelines/bpgead/> (accessed Apr. 22, 2009).

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