

**Brave New World: Special Collections in  
Transition  
IFLA (Lyon)**

August 18, 2014

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# Purpose of today's workshop

- How and what do we teach current and future special collection librarians the skills they need to succeed in the changing world of special collection librarianship?
- How do we teach others? students, the general public and administrators
- What are the future areas or trends that special collection librarians need to understand and manage.

# Changes from above

- More open and accessible
- Demonstrate that libraries and special collections are dynamic
- Fewer resources available
- Prove relevance
- Assessment
- Belief that everything is digitized

# Change from below

- New areas of interest
- Changes in scholarship
- Changes in public interest
- Instant response or availability

# Collect

- Diversity of formats
- Diversity of subjects
- Market
- Provenance and authenticity
- Contemporary material
- How to say no

# Contemporary material



# Description

- Changes in cataloging standards (special collections and general collections)
- New formats (i.e. born digital)
- Less is more vs. detailed descriptions
- Efficiency and productivity
- Collaboration
- Specialized cataloging projects
- Promiscuous metadata
- New ways of access
- User contributions

# Preservation

- New formats
- Born digital
- Buildings
- Security
- Digitization
- Born digital



# Access

- New discovery tools
- Minimize barriers to the creation of knowledge
- Impact of “less if more”
- Digitization (beyond reproducing original work)
- Social media (previously Web 2.0)
- How to reach the general public (including the “younger” generation)
- Open access
- Teaching with the collection
- Copyright, intellectual property and rights management

# Observations of transition and change for special collections

- Move away from concept “treasure room”
- Collaboration
- Growth of assessment
- Diverse and competing expectations
- Learn to let go

# New appointments

- Digital archivist
- Archivist – Metadata coordinator
- Archivist –visual materials.
- 2 rare book catalog librarians (multi-language, format; now how to manipulate metadata
- 2 curators (early books & manuscripts; American literature)
- Head of Digital Services
- Public relations manager

# Characteristics of new hires

- Strong subject knowledge
- Technology skills
- Public presentation skills
- Flexibility (embrace change)
- People skills
- High energy
- Commitment to concept of special collections

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