

**Art in a Medium Size University Library:
Acquisition, Cataloging and Access Issues, Challenges and Opportunities**

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Abstract

In 2001 the William Madison Randall Library at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington found itself with a substantial collection of art, acquired through gifts and purchases to augment existing collections of faculty scholarship and regional materials. What had been tracked in a simple administrative database had become a collection deserving improved access. This paper outlines the acquisition, cataloging and access issues that shaped the evolution of the art works from their status first as decoration on the library walls, then as fully cataloged library materials in the online catalog, then as digitized images available in a searchable Web tour. Explored are the reasons behind the collection development push and the methods of acquisition, how and why the collection outgrew its original inventory database, and why the University Librarian turned to catalog librarians for solutions to improve access by utilizing and linking data existing in separate databases. The paper offers implications and lessons learned that could assist other libraries that may face such a challenge, as well as a literature review of the issues faced in art documentation. Randall Library's experience illustrates how a decision to invest in cataloging an unusual medium can go beyond the basics of author and subject access to create an unusually valuable foundation for promotional, curricular, and Web-based ventures.

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Introduction

By the late 1990s, the William Madison Randall Library at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) had acquired a small collection of original art for display throughout the building. Mainly paintings and drawings, with a few sculptures, the pieces were owned by the library and permanently in place, but they were not perceived as library materials, or represented in the online catalog. If anyone expressed an interest, they were directed to the office of the University Librarian, who maintained the Randall Treasures Access Database, which contained basic inventory information about each piece, such as date and source of acquisition, artist contact information, and general description or title. The University Librarian then decided to expand the collection (for reasons that will be subsequently explored) in large part to recognize and utilize the art works not simply as decorations, but as library materials with as much value for scholarship and intellectual advancement as traditional books or journals. This perspective supports the library's mission statement to "effectively support the University's teaching, scholarship, artistic achievement and service functions by providing dynamic collections of informational resources in all formats."¹

The decision to expand the art collection caused rapid growth beginning in 2000. This paper explores the reasons behind the collection development push and the methods of acquisition, how the collection outgrew the original database system, and how and why the University Librarian turned to the cataloging department for answers. Catalog librarians are typically the intellectual organizers of materials and collections upon arrival, and such was the case for the organization and processing of the art collection. The two catalog librarians at Randall Library (the Cataloging Supervisor Librarian and the Special Formats Catalog Librarian) were active participants in shaping critical decisions including which art works would be cataloged, what level of cataloging would be conducted, and how the cataloging could be performed in order to create a bibliographic foundation for related digital and Web-based projects based around the collection. The catalog librarians embraced this opportunity, again echoing the library's mission by "implementing innovative and creative methods centered on the needs of its users to inspire

and support intellectual curiosity, imagination, rational thinking and thoughtful expression.”² In 2003, the art collection numbered more than 450 pieces. Each piece is accounted for and is either individually cataloged into the online catalog and updated into the OCLC Worldcat database, recorded in the Randall Treasures database, or listed as part of a finding guide in the Special Collections department. Randall Library’s experience illustrates how a decision to invest in cataloging an unusual medium can go beyond the basics of author and subject access to create an unusually valuable foundation for promotional, curricular, and Web-based ventures.

Literature Review

There have been a number of articles published about cataloging and the documentation of art both before and after the rise of digital and online technology. Articles prior to the mid 1990s focus on overarching issues of standardization and controlled vocabulary in describing and providing access to art works, with an eye toward unknown but anticipated technologies of the future. Most of this literature originates within the museum or art history communities. However, an entire issue of the journal *Library Trends* was published in 1988 with the subtitle “Linking Art Objects to Art Information.” The effort “joins the concerns of traditional art librarianship both to topics found in information science . . . and to topics found in recent art historical writing.”³ A major theme is the propensity within the museum and art history community to create and utilize local solutions for the documentation of art objects; whether successful or not, experiences are rarely shared with or recognized by the larger field. Thus countless institutions have implemented idiosyncratic systems to describe and provide some level of access to their own unique collections, while the larger issues continue to perplex the entire community. Such issues covered in the *Library Trends* articles include subject access, controlled vocabulary, and the possible roles of automation. One appendix outlines key differences between libraries and museums.⁴ Overall, the academic library is viewed as a separate community, whose tools are acknowledged but not deemed appropriate or useful in the world of museums and art history. Patricia Ann Reed and Jane Sledge make this point by opening their article with the salvo, “Imagine cataloging *without* AACR2 (Anglo-American

Cataloguing Rules, 2nd ed.), Library of Congress Name Authority, and Library of Congress Subject Headings. Welcome to the world of museum cataloging.”⁵

Esther G. Bierbaum raises issues about the cataloging of non-book items from a library perspective. She points to a trend of unconventional materials proliferating in academic library collections, chiefly by chance or circumstance. Three-dimensional (3D) materials are defined as encompassing art objects (presumably sculpture), games, models, natural history specimens, globes and the like. Although such materials do not routinely warrant formal collection development, the rules put forth in Anglo American Cataloguing Rules 2nd edition (AACR2) allow them to be “routinely cataloged in conformity [with other library materials]; the result was bibliographical equality.”⁶ In addition, Bierbaum puts forth the strategy to “participate in research in the instructional use of 3D, and publicize the results” and to “locate, identify and centrally catalog objects of multidisciplinary value and publicize the program.”⁷ This study does not relate to art works such as paintings, and cannot address as yet undeveloped digitization or Web factors. However, its larger message of handling unconventional items as library materials worthy of cataloging and multidisciplinary publicity meshes with Randall Library’s experiences with its art collection.

Library literature since the mid-1990s has addressed art cataloging within the context of the Internet, the Web, and increasingly advanced database systems. *ArtMARC Sourcebook* is a collection of institutional experiences utilizing the MACHine Readable Cataloging (MARC) format to catalog art and architecture collections.⁸ This monograph champions MARC, pointing to its flexibility and ability to integrate “visual document and object records within a central catalog of other materials such as books, maps, moving pictures and sound recordings, thereby making it possible to conduct a search on a single subject across collections.”⁹ However, the editors acknowledge the limitations of MARC for working with art objects, due to vocabulary and subject access issues, the question of collection level versus item level cataloging, and concepts that are often more ambiguous for art objects than for library materials, such as date and place of publication and physical description.¹⁰ The chapters include detailed explanations of MARC tag and field usage for collections of widely varying materials and access

requirements. Naturally, the collections detailed in this book are of large scale and prominent provenance. The art and architecture collection at Florida International University numbers 65,000 slides, while the California Historical Society's photographs number over 500,000, and the collections in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress total over 13 million pictorial materials. While Randall Library's art project can hardly compare in terms of size or broad cultural relevance, it can benefit from the guidance put forth in the *ArtMARC Sourcebook*, and from Elizabeth O'Keefe's conclusion therein that "MARC can be used for just about anything."¹¹

The ability to digitize images for display on the Web has become a critical factor in providing access to visual materials. This new generation of access calls for some kind of cataloging, whether in the traditional library sense, or in the form of the most basic data elements, such as artist and date in non-standard form. Although there is more and more library literature studying the explosion of digitization projects involving library and archival materials (even within academic libraries), few involve cataloging individual images in the library catalog. This is due in part to the fact that most digitization projects involve collections of materials, which are typically not cataloged on an item level basis. While individual images are typically digitized within a separate Web site or database, they are rarely included in the library catalog.

Karen Reilly and Jolene de Verges offer an example of an academic library that made the decision to utilize the MARC format and catalog individual images in an unusual and fruitful collaboration. In 1997, after an agreement of cooperation between the College of the Holy Cross and the nearby Worcester Art Museum, the college applied for and received a grant to fund the Virtual Worcester Art Museum, a "megasource of complementary databases: the Holy Cross bibliographic database, the Holy Cross slide database, the Art Museum bibliographic database, and a newly created Art Museum database of digitized images and associated curatorial records."¹² The scope of the project was large. Worcester is the second largest art museum in New England, with 35,000 paintings, sculpture, photography, prints and drawings; its museum library holds almost 45,000 volumes. A key to the success of the database project was the decision to utilize the MARC format, rather than a Web-based tool such as

SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) or XML (Extensible Markup Language). One reason given was “the capacity to search across databases, allowing unique resources that are physically separated to appear as a single entity.”¹³ Such a scenario would insure that a patron’s search for an artist would retrieve records not only for books about the artist held at the college library, but also records for works of art created by the same artist, held at the neighboring museum. This argument underscores an increasing desire for online access to *all* available materials, including conventional library books as well as visual, graphic, digital, electronic, multi-dimensional, or as yet unforeseen types of materials. The article acknowledges the traditions cited in the earlier art history and museum literature, that “historically, museum and visual resource professionals had no incentive to standardize the description of works of art. Artworks, unlike books, are unique objects; uniform cataloging methods were not needed.”¹⁴ However, by this time advances in technology had improved the ability to share data over automated networks. Although work is ongoing to develop descriptive standards (i.e., at the Visual Resources Association, and the Getty Information Institute), within the academic library environment the established usability of and familiarity with the MARC format made it the best choice for this project. The article describes decision making in terms of scanning, retrospective conversion, bibliographic processing, cataloging issues including MARC tag use and subject access, staff and student involvement and workload, and an overview of different types of use that the database has enjoyed to date. The authors cite the project’s success in terms of the resulting universal access to digitized images, as well as benefits of cooperation between the college library and the museum.¹⁵ Now known as Bridges to Art, the database offers the ability to search across the databases of the Worcester Art Library, Worcester Art Images, and the Holy Cross Libraries.¹⁶ Although this project is hardly a mirror image of the Randall Library art project, due to its multiple collections, their size, and the collaboration with an outside museum, the decision to utilize the MARC format and to catalog on an item level basis reflects a similar willingness to view works of art as library materials.

An overview of the literature in the museum, art history, and library communities illustrates a longstanding struggle to document art objects in order to convey an adequate verbal description of unique

and non-textual materials such as paintings, sculptures, slides, and photographs, and provide some kind of access to them. The utilization of library terms, techniques, and standards to these ends has gained a measure of acceptance in the years following the advent of automated networks, digital imaging, and the opportunities of the Internet and the Web. These breakthroughs have allowed online library catalogs and databases to offer the possibility of integration with outside databases, increasing access opportunities in large part through the MARC format. The object of this paper is to illustrate how a mid-sized university library's decision to catalog its small but growing art collection can have larger consequences not only for increased multidisciplinary use of the materials, but for overlap and integration with a separate Web-based database that provides images and description.

Collection Building Phase

It is not uncommon for library collections to begin organically, long before an official collection development policy is in place. Some of the first pieces in Randall Library's art collection related to the origins of the university, such as formal portraits of former chancellors and presidents. Through the 1990s, Randall Library acquired pieces here and there, mainly through gifts by regional artists, forming a small collection to display on the walls. The art formed a freestanding decorative collection, without direct input from or ties to the university's art department (offering degrees in art history and studio art). There was no consistent effort to document the incoming art until the University Librarian and the University Archivist (within the library staff) launched an effort to record rudimentary information, take digital images, and create a simple administrative database (later named the Randall Treasures Access Database). The University Librarian foresaw the eventual possibility of a Web-based tour showcasing the library's art collection, but at this time the database served no curricular, scholarly, or otherwise academic purpose, and was simply an administrative record retention inventory.

At this point the University Librarian made the decision to expand the art collection. Several factors were involved, one of which was the library's existing faculty scholarship collection, wherein the archivist actively acquires and catalogs publications by current, former, and retired university faculty.¹⁷

¹⁷The collection includes article reprints, newspaper columns, book chapters, book reviews, and the like. The art department faculty were underrepresented in the traditional paper publications, since their scholarly output was the production of art works. The University Librarian and the archivist realized that these faculty members represented a rich resource and that it seemed logical to include a sample of their work as part of the faculty scholarship collection. This decision simultaneously added nearly twenty pieces to the burgeoning art collection. The art department faculty offered some of their most representative and significant works within the library's price range. They were pleased to have their work permanently on display at the library and some came to donate additional pieces as they began to see the library's collection of art as a teaching tool.

As the art collection grew due to these faculty acquisitions, it also saw growth from donations. The University Librarian placed great value on the aesthetic appeal of the library and sought to bolster it with an emphasis on decoration that could be educational and inspirational. The library competed for and received a small grant to buy local art as part of this project. In addition, a faculty friend and donor committed several pieces of art to the library, and others donated gift funds for the project. Through networking and informal promotion, Randall Library's newfound interest in art began to generate community interest and significant gifts. The driving force at this stage was donor satisfaction. The collection remained decorative and was not geared toward the acquisition of art at the level of a separate university or community art museum. Throughout, the goal has remained "art in the library." This approach has been successful, garnering pieces by area artists with a connection to the university, as well as works valued at thousands of dollars by nationally known artists, such as Dale Chihuly. Prints from the estate of an emeritus faculty member and library patron greatly expanded the scope and size of the collection. These included original works by Francisco Goya, Fritz Eichenberg, Käthe Kollwitz, and William Hogarth. The library's collection of art quickly became impressive, but has remained manageable in size and scope.

Randall Library has identified a goal wherein "special efforts are made to collect, preserve and make available information resources relating to the coastal region in which the library is located."¹⁸ The

result is the Southeast North Carolina Collection (SENC).¹⁹ The guiding policy of SENC has built upon the Special Collections department's original mission to collect original historic material about Southeast North Carolina. Beyond traditional acquisition materials such as books, gray literature, and manuscript collections, SENC has expanded to include music of the region. Just as the art collection is a natural corollary to the faculty scholarship collection, it follows that works by regional artists (or art work representing the region) would also be a natural fit for SENC. Thus most purchased art works and gift items are sought from regional artists.

The gift collection of prints mentioned earlier represents a separate branch of Randall Library's art acquisition. In this case numerous gifts of art were coming in without a regional component, but of significant quality. An unframed art collection was created in the Special Collections department for such pieces, primarily for student, faculty, and research use. This material has been utilized in a printmaking course and student exhibition, and it is not anticipated that it will be framed or displayed on a permanent basis.

As these varied efforts began, the art collection grew rapidly. Before reaching the ultimate goal of an online art tour, the focus shifted to immediate questions concerning promotion and cataloging of and access to the collection. At this point, the University Librarian looked to the library's two catalog librarians for input into the process. Together they examined the history and possibilities of the art collection and made the decision to catalog a significant number of the art works individually and at the fullest level.

Cataloging Phase

Access was a key factor in the decision to perform full-level cataloging for the art works. Simply displaying original art on the walls of the library served an aesthetic function, but offered no opportunity to learn more about the pieces, to use them in support of research or scholarship, to identify them as library materials, or to locate them via the library catalog. Creating an individual bibliographic record for each of the art works makes them searchable by artist, by medium, by topical subjects, and by other

bibliographical data. This type of access is especially important for faculty and students in the art department, due to the library's continuous efforts to improve access to library materials, promote new collections, and create dynamic connections with academic departments. Since the catalog is Web-based, it also offers community members and artists improved access to resources that might otherwise have been unknown. Updating the records to the OCLC Worldcat database opens that access to the entire world.

The decision to proceed with full-level cataloging was made in full agreement. However, the next question involved what would or would not be cataloged. Volume of work was a factor, so the University Librarian and the two catalog librarians decided to give priority to cataloging items that support specific existing collections. This includes the following types of art:

- pieces that are historic in their importance to the Special Collections department; this included significant originals or prints collected prior to this decision
- pieces that have subject coverage in the imagery of the region (SENC)
- pieces that are created by regional artists (SENC)
- pieces that are part of the faculty scholarship collection
- pieces that are part of the original Archives collection (i.e., paintings of former presidents and chancellors)
- any other pieces that do not fit one of these categories but was an original art work

Reproductions (prints) were not initially chosen for cataloging. These pieces continue to be tracked, recorded and inventoried in the Randall Treasures Access Database in the administrative office. Due entirely to limited resources, this element of the collection has taken secondary status. It is not being ignored from an educational standpoint; the University Librarian hopes to include it in the catalog when sufficient resources are available.

Cataloging Challenges and Issues

Libraries (both public and academic) increasingly offer a rich variety of media besides monographs to serve the information needs of their patrons, including video recordings, sound recordings, microforms, serials, electronic resources, manuscripts, maps, and occasionally even works of art. Ideally, librarians look past the format to the material and its value for scholarship. Adhering to this perspective allows a book, a journal, a map, and a painting to enjoy equal bibliographic footing, relative to other circumstances, in terms of cataloging. The catalog librarians at Randall Library embraced the opportunity to work with an unfamiliar format. They perform original and copy cataloging on all formats for general and special collections, including video recordings and sound recordings, films, cartographic materials, kits, slides, and electronic resources. Paintings, prints, and sculptures were altogether something new, but the catalog librarians approached them first as library materials, and second as unusual formats that would undoubtedly require effort, flexibility and patience.

As noted, the library's administrative office maintained the Randall Treasures Access Database to keep track of inventory. The following elements had been captured for each item:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Location number/local system number | Local Interest |
| Artist's name | How acquired |
| Artist's geographic location | Value |
| Title or provided description | Comments |
| Regional (yes or no) | ID |
| Original (yes or no) | |

[Insert Figure 1 here]

These elements about the art and its provenance allowed the catalog librarians to enter the project with some basic data in hand. They began by performing preliminary research. Catalog librarians develop a wide range of knowledge as they provide description and subject access for library materials on every conceivable subject. This is especially true for original cataloging. As neither librarian had a fine arts background, the first step was to review appropriate reference sources in order to identify media and materials and become familiar with appropriate art terminology.²⁰

In addition, they studied key cataloging resources for guidance in working with a largely unfamiliar format. They first reviewed chapter eight in AACR2, which provides descriptive rules for graphic materials and defines them as “two-dimensional art originals and reproductions, charts, photographs, [and] technical drawings.”²¹ They also consulted Bibliographic Formats and Standards (BFAS) for guidance on inputting bibliographical data for fixed and variable fields in MARC records for such materials.²²

As noted, the decision to catalog the art came after its acquisition through the University Librarian’s administrative office and its subsequent placement on display throughout the library. Thus the catalog librarians worked with the materials in public areas and without removing them from the walls. They measured the art works and gathered descriptive information, then created catalog records using Cataloging Micro Enhancer for Windows (CatMe). Additional data from the Randall Treasures Access Database were added to the bibliographic records, such as each work’s unique identification number and donor information.

Randall Library materials are classified using Library of Congress classification numbers or local accession numbers. Was either type of classification appropriate for works of art that would never be shelved or housed together physically? After consulting with the Head of Technical Services, the catalog librarians decided to utilize local accession numbers that matched the sequential numbers assigned to the art works in the Randall Treasures Access Database. This system became more meaningful after the catalog librarians created the online Randall Library Artworks Location Maps, in which the accession

numbers were added to existing online library floor maps to reflect the exact wall location of each art work. A uniform resource locator (URL) was added to each bibliographic record using the 856 field, providing access to the online map for the first or second floor. A unified message was also included in the 856 field to display hyperlinked text in each art work's OPAC record: "Find the numbered location of the artwork on the 1st [or 2nd] floor library map." With a click, users can retrieve the map and match the local accession number in the art work's record with the corresponding number on the online map.²³ The art collection is fluid and ongoing, with new works acquired often, and existing works temporarily relocated or removed. The accession number system simplifies the inevitable editing and data maintenance required to correlate physical changes impacting map locations with corresponding accession numbers.

Subject access is an important aspect of cataloging and, in this case, the priorities were to represent both the media of the art works and the topics represented. Using genre/form headings in the 655 field was the ideal solution for indicating the form of the art work, since they come from specialized vocabularies such as Thesaurus for Graphic Materials (TGM).²⁴ However, the 655 field is not indexed in Randall Library's system, so the catalog librarians assigned media subject headings in the topical 650 field. Although these subject headings designate topics rather than forms, this approach provided some level of subject access. These headings include "Painting," "Drawing," and "Portrait." In addition, the geographic subdivision "North Carolina" and appropriate county names were added to all art media headings to reflect the source of these original art works. The decision to utilize this level of geographic subdivision illustrates the library's commitment to collect and fully catalog materials representing regional culture, as described earlier with regard to SENC.

In addition, topical subject headings were assigned in the bibliographic records in order to represent the subject matter. Form subdivision "Pictorial works" is used after each topical heading where appropriate. Examples of topical subject headings include "Beaches \$v Pictorial works" and "Mexicans in art." Finally, the University Librarian wanted to have a method to easily retrieve all the original art work

bibliographic records in the online catalog. The solution was to create and include the local subject heading “Randall original artworks” using the 690 field in the bibliographical record.

Digital Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges

Once most of the art was cataloged, the University Librarian revisited the idea for a Web-based tour of the collection. In 2002, Randall Library had received a grant to create a digital Web site centered on materials relating to World War II.²⁵ For that project, Randall Library had acquired PastPerfect, a software package geared towards small- and medium- sized museums and art galleries.²⁶ Because the software includes digital imaging and Web interface capabilities, the University Librarian realized that the significant investment in full-level cataloging for the art collection could now yield a digital Web collection with relative ease.

The data existed in two separate forms: the Randall Treasures Access Database, which was inventory and valuation driven, and the library catalog database, which was access and research driven. As noted, the catalog records presented expanded elements of description, sizes, and subject access. Unfortunately, the bibliographic records in Randall Library’s catalog database were not readily transferable into the PastPerfect database. Nevertheless, the expanded information existed in an easily accessible form and a student was trained to perform data entry from the two existing databases into PastPerfect. The resulting Randall Library Art and Treasures Tour combines data from both resources, along with the critical visual component of digital images of the art itself.²⁷

The decisions for the art works’ inclusion in the Web tour are determined using several criteria. The first factor is to include only original art works. Secondly, the works need to be out of copyright protection or the University Librarian must have gained permission from the artist to place the work on the site. Indeed, the issue of copyright is unavoidable. In order to place the images in the public catalog and on a public web site, the University Librarian seeks copyright permission from the artists. Most are willing to give permission, but others have never responded or have been impossible to locate. If permission is not acquired, the record is maintained in the public catalog, but no image is linked to the

bibliographic record or added to the tour. The copyright issue adds an unusual factor to the cataloging process. This matter is not the norm for library catalogs, which are not concerned with digital imaging; it does, however, illustrate a growing area of contention and concern and represents an emerging gray area of the copyright law as it pertains to Web-based online catalogs. If an institution owns an item and wants to add a digital image of the item to an existing database, is permission required? As catalogers deal more frequently with new formats and are called on to add images, music segments and video clips to online catalogs and databases, is it their responsibility to monitor copyright compliance? If not, whose responsibility is it in the library?

Once chosen, the art works are photographed. Since the collection is primarily visual, the effort to present quality images of the art is paramount. Initially a photographer was commissioned and care was taken to photograph the work in two ways: first, a full representation of the image including its frame, and second, a photograph of the visible image itself, without showing the frame. Both choices are available within the Web tour.²⁸

After the data entry and Web site construction was complete, the catalog librarians took the next step of linking each Web tour image URL back into the individual bibliographic record for the art work in the library catalog. A unified message was also included in the 856 field to display hyperlinked text in each art work's OPAC record: "View the online image of this art work." Each bibliographic record is thus supplemented with one link to the image within the Web tour, and another link to the online map showing the art work location within the library. These links are also present in the OCLC WorldCat database records, allowing true global access to the art works.

Workflow issues constitute another area for review, specifically the Web site construction and the cooperation of the Associate University Librarian for Computing Services. As noted, a student performed data entry, entering existing catalog data into the PastPerfect software records. Some libraries might prefer to use catalog librarians or paraprofessional cataloging staff to construct the Web site information, depending on resource availability. As the library takes cataloging products and creates new added value products, should the responsibility for quality control, authority work, data entry, and such remain the

purview of catalogers, since they created the base data? At Randall Library, a team was established to create the new digital Web product; it was made up of the University Librarian, the Cataloging Supervisor Librarian, the Special Formats Catalog Librarian, the Coordinator of Special Collections and Archives, and the Associate University Librarian for Computing Services. The power of such a team and its individual members will obviously vary at each institution, depending on internal resources. The argument can be made that catalog librarians should be naturally central to any such effort due to their expertise in providing guidance and assistance with key elements of data control and authority work. However, with more libraries designating positions to Web and systems librarians, no profession-wide consensus exists that would designate the realm of cataloging as the logical choice to manage every aspect of a digital library project.

To demonstrate the difficulty in starting and constructing a data set that portals across all of the anticipated and unanticipated needs, figures 1-7 provide a single record sample of the databases that were used and continue to be maintained in order to keep track of the many works of art.

Figure 1. Randall Treasures MS Access Database record

Figure 2. Online public catalog record

Figure 3. PastPerfect internal record

Figure 4. PastPerfect Web tour record

Figure 5. PastPerfect Web tour enlarged image

Figure 6. OCLC MARC record in CatMe

Figure 7. OCLC WorldCat record

[Insert Figures 2-7 here.]

Because the art collection is an ongoing project, the library faces continuing issues of maintenance and expansion related to the public catalog records and the Web tour. As new works of art are acquired, they are entered into the Randall Treasures Access Database, and are cataloged as described previously. The University Librarian, the Coordinator of Special Collections and Archives, and the Associate University Librarian for Computing Services made the decision to update the Art and Treasures

Tour Web site on an annual basis. In preparation for the annual update, they will identify new works using both the Access Database and the public catalog. They will take digital images (now performed in-house by library staff). They will seek copyright permissions. If copyright permission is granted, the PastPerfect database is updated internally and the new images are linked in the database. Finally, when all updates for the time period in question are ready, the PastPerfect software is used to reconfigure and expand the website. The catalog librarians then harvest the new art works' Web tour URLs back into the public catalog bibliographic records.

Implications for Other Libraries

1. *Cataloging a collection of original art or implementing a Web-based digital collection is not just an issue for "giant libraries."* The cataloging staff at this mid-sized university library has been innovative and demonstrated leadership in working on the art project. The opportunity arose because an art collection quickly developed into something too critical to ignore, and because so little had been done with this type of material in the traditional cataloging world. The relatively small scope of the collection did not dissuade the catalog librarians from embarking on an ambitious project that resulted in greatly enhanced access to the original art via the library catalog and the World Wide Web.

2. *Catalogers can utilize core lessons from introductory cataloging courses in library school while working with different media and new technologies.* This blending of traditional teachings and new technology was interesting and challenging. There was no local precedent for cataloging original art, but Randall Library catalog librarians were able to build on a foundation of existing skills, review rules for unfamiliar special formats, and apply emerging standards and guidelines regarding Web technologies. By doing so they became part of a larger library initiative -- using digital technologies to promote and enhance access to collections of all types.

3. *Cataloging non-print materials in the library's online catalog can give them a new life by making them intellectually accessible.* Most of Randall Library's art works and artists were not found in the OCLC WorldCat database. Apart from literature focusing on world-renowned masters, there is little "library"

representation of practicing artists. To date, Randall Library has contributed over 150 original art records to WorldCat, providing a global opportunity both to immortalize and to codify these intellectual products. The foundation of the catalog work further allows enhanced visibility through a Web site, making the materials readily available to a wider worldwide audience outside the scholarly domain.

4. The acquisition, cataloging, and promotion of an art collection, especially the works of local artists, can increase the university's visibility in the community. In addition to generating general goodwill for Randall Library's attention to regional culture, these efforts have opened doors to new donor relationships, helped the library develop a network of regional artists, and led to new opportunities for acquiring related and regional manuscript, music and other cultural materials. These efforts have demonstrated the library's commitment to look beyond traditional print materials in order to fully represent the intellectual makeup of its community.

5. Faculty members can utilize original art in teaching at a level that is unlikely without the benefits of cataloging. For example, a faculty member in the UNCW art department was preparing a course on the history of printmaking. The University Librarian recommended that she investigate the many original art prints housed in the Special Collections department, and took the step of e-mailing her a list of catalog record links for each of the art works. Only after having the opportunity to easily review the details in the catalog records did her enthusiasm grow about the potential use of the art. The faculty member created an innovative class assignment involving student research of the provenance and history of the art prints.

6. Choosing to enhance a catalog with records for other formats increases costs. Extensive original cataloging of a new or special format takes time to review rules, guidelines, and techniques seldom used in a print environment, and to conduct research on unfamiliar terms, vocabulary, and specialized descriptions. The University Librarian made the decision to give the catalog librarians the opportunity to commit considerable time and effort toward the art project and this dedication of resources provided rich results. A commitment of time and money is necessary to undertake this level of detail and the preparation required.

7. *Cataloging such a project may cause a shift in the workflow dynamic through collaboration with other library departments and staff members.* Randall Library catalog librarians became members of a team effort with librarians in the Systems, Special Collections, and Web Resources departments. Whether such a team is officially designated with a title and defined responsibilities, or whether it remains informal and fluid, as in the case at Randall Library, it will still combine different elements of the library staff. Collaborations often result in team members gaining greater understanding about other departmental processes. This is an especially rich opportunity for catalog librarians to illustrate the value of the catalog process within the team project as well as the larger library venue.

Conclusions

Special materials that come to a library may serve different audiences and purposes in ways that traditional materials such as books do not. The effort to catalog materials such as art works takes on a greater degree of complexity and creativity, especially when a library sets expanded goals of incorporating the images into a separate Web-based database as well as in the online catalog. The unusual calls for more effort when its unique attributes call for bigger goals, and with bigger goals comes more complexity.

The art collection project at Randall Library reinforces what should be the core vision of any cataloging unit. Cataloging is not about the format, but is rather about the opportunity and mission of doing whatever is necessary to give added value and life to important materials that the library owns or has access to. Without cataloging, the material may have little, if any, use potential and, indeed, might as well not exist in the library. Minimal cataloging can improve access, but full level cataloging to the extent the library can afford improves access proportionally. Just because a material type is not standard should not diminish its importance in the cataloging process. The Randall Library art project demonstrates that cataloging adds intellectual value to all library materials, however atypical they may appear at first glance.

¹ William Madison Randall Library, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, “Mission Statement and Goals.” Available online from: <http://library.uncwil.edu/goals.html> (accessed 21 February 2002).

² Ibid.

³ Deirdre C. Stam and Angela Giral, “Introduction,” *Library Trends* 37, no. 2 (1988): 117.

⁴ Nancy S. Allen, “The Museum Prototype Project of the J. Paul Getty Art History and Information Program: A View from the Library,” *Library Trends* 37, no. 2 (1988): 191.

⁵ Patricia Ann Reed and Jane Sledge, “Thinking about Museum Information,” *Library Trends* 37, no. 2 (1988): 220.

⁶ Esther G. Bierbaum, “Beyond Print: Object Collections in Academic Libraries,” *Collection Building* 10, no. 1-2 (1989): 9.

⁷ Ibid., 10-11.

⁸ Linda McRae and Lynda S. White, eds., *ArtMARC Sourcebook: Cataloging Art, Architecture, and Their Surrogate Images* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1998).

⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 14.

¹¹ Elizabeth O’Keefe, “From Cuneiform to MARC: A Database for Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals Owned by the Pierpont Morgan Library,” in *ArtMARC Sourcebook*, ed. Linda McRae and Lynda S.White, 194 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1998).

¹² Karen Reilly and Jolene de Verges, “A Dynamic Model of Museum and Academic Library Cooperation: Cataloging Image Collections,” *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 8, no.1 (2001): 17.

¹³ Ibid., 20.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 23.

¹⁶ To see the “Bridges to Art” Web site visit: <http://college.holycross.edu/bridgestoart/>.

¹⁷ Adina Lack, Andrew Dutka, and Sherman Hayes, “Faculty Scholarship Collections: Identifying, Capturing, Archiving, and Accessing History,” *Collection Management* 26, no. 2 (2001): 57-66.

¹⁸ Randall Library, “Mission Statement and Goals.”

¹⁹ The Special Collections department’s definition of Southeast North Carolina encompasses eight counties: Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, and Sampson.

²⁰ John Quick, *Artists’ and Illustrators’ Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977); Ralph Mayer, *A Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques* (New York: Crowell, 1969).

²¹ *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2d ed., 1998 rev. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1998): 8-3.

²² *Bibliographic Formats and Standards*, 3rd ed. (Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, 2003). Available online from: <http://www.oclc.org/bibformats/> (15 February 2003).

²³ To see the Randall Library Artworks Location Maps please go to http://library.uncwil.edu/techserv/artworks_location.htm (first floor) and http://library.uncwil.edu/techserv/artworks_location2.htm (second floor)

²⁴ Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, *Thesaurus for Graphic Materials*, 2nd ed. (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service, 1995).

²⁵ To see the Web site “World War II through the Eyes of the Cape Fear” visit: <http://capefearww2.uncwil.edu/>.

²⁶ For more information about PastPerfect Museum Software, visit its Web site at: <http://www.museumsoftware.com/>.

²⁷ The Web tour title was chosen to incorporate “treasures” from the existing UNCW Museum of World Cultures, a sub-unit of Randall Library. This inclusion of items such as oriental rugs and decorative maps calls for another paper to discuss how to catalog those oddities.

²⁸ To see the Web tour visit: <http://coast2.lib.uncwil.edu/arttour/tourpage.html>.