

# Observations on Scholarly Engagement in the 2008 Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program

Council on Library and Information Resources

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## Introduction

As defined by CLIR, the “Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives” program aims to identify and catalog hidden special collections and archives of “potentially substantive intellectual value that are unknown and inaccessible to scholars.” By providing resources for cataloging key hidden collections and by facilitating the linking of online records, the program also aims “to construct a new research and teaching environment of national importance.” Inherent in the program’s design is a conviction that its success will depend on the ability of the library and archival communities not only to participate actively in the creation of this new environment by processing and cataloging hidden collections, but also by forging new connections with scholars. In a sense, the program is attempting to answer the call of scholars, such as Anthony Grafton, who have written of the pressing need “to bring librarians and scholars, planners and users together...to fashion what we now need ... libraries that can regain their place as craft ateliers of scholarship....”<sup>1</sup> The “Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives” program is aiming ambitiously to help design, populate, and build these new “ateliers of scholarship,” hybrid physical and digital spaces requiring recalibrations of relationships between librarians, archivists, and scholars. Now entering its third grant cycle, the “Hidden Collections” program is continuing to provide a novel opportunity to observe and describe approaches to scholarly engagement as currently practiced within a diverse set of U.S. libraries and archives.

This report summarizes the results of a year-long study of the ways that librarians and archivists are structuring and developing relationships with scholars in the course of the first fifteen funded projects. Both opportunistic and pragmatic in nature, the study focuses on current practices, while also encouraging substantive conversation between librarians, archivists, and expert users about those practices. The research team gathered quantitative data through an online survey and qualitative data from site visits to each of the participating libraries and archives, analyzed both sets of data, and then integrated the findings in this report. The goal of this report is to provide information that will be useful to the project teams and the larger library, archival, and scholarly communities to which they belong. All of these communities share a common interest in ensuring that the world’s cultural heritage is preserved, made accessible, and used for teaching, learning, and research.

In the context of this study, the term *scholarly engagement* is defined as interaction with collections that results in the creation of new knowledge. Such knowledge – whether created by academic

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Grafton, "Apocalypse in the stacks? The research library in the age of Google," *Daedalus* (2009), pp. 97-98.

faculty, independent researchers, filmmakers, artists, journalists, students, or librarians and archivists themselves – is typically reviewed by peers, absorbed into educational curricula, and able to be collected and preserved for future generations. Without such productive engagement, rare and unique materials – even if processed and cataloged – remain dormant. Together with librarians and archivists who ensure the physical safety and accessibility of collections, the individuals who teach, create, and publish using original sources bring library materials to new audiences and are well-positioned to serve as advocates for collections. For the purposes of this study, the term “scholar” was employed as shorthand for such users, regardless of their chosen professional identities. The study recognizes and honors the challenges and tensions between the distinct cultures of the scholar and archivist, but also seeks to look for the common ground that unites the two.

Scholars, librarians, and archivists view collections differently, in large part due to their professional training. For instance, archivists are trained to make collections accessible in such a way as to allow for the widest possible use by the widest range of users; in fact, archivists are explicitly taught not to distinguish between types of users. In *Understanding Archives & Manuscripts*, James M. O’Toole and Richard J. Cox explain that archivists are trained to “administer their collections equitably and impartially.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the authors argue, archivists should “place a fundamental value on minimizing distinctions among users of their holdings... and in particular they should not attempt to distinguish so-called serious users from others or otherwise discriminate on the basis of academic qualifications.” Scholars, on the other hand, are trained to become experts on a narrow topic within a broader discipline; as researchers and teachers, they typically share their knowledge with their peers and students. In *The Scholar’s Art: Literary Studies in a Managed World*, Jerome McGann writes that “...the scholar’s vocation is to preserve and pass on our cultural inheritance. Scholars do it by studying that inheritance and talking – usually among themselves – about what they find.”<sup>3</sup> Although the goals of both professions are ultimately the same – to promote the growth and preservation of knowledge, the differences in professional training can create obstacles to collaboration. The archivist may emphasize preservation of collections over access, while the scholar may find more significance in access than preservation. What from a scholar’s perspective may seem to be an archivist’s disinterest in a research topic may be the archivist’s attempt to maintain impartiality and openness to other use; on the other hand, what may seem to the archivist to be the scholar’s narrow passion, may, in fact, be necessary for the scholar to advance the growth of her discipline.<sup>4</sup> Differences in professional training and orientation to collections may be overcome through successful engagement involving space and context for sustained conversation. The report below details the ways in which engagement between the professions – encompassing substantive exchanges of information that facilitate understanding, discovery, and outcomes – is playing a key role in cataloging hidden collections and archives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

During the study, the research team was interested in the ways scholarly engagement occurs not just in the use of processed and cataloged collections, but in *all* stages of the project lifecycle – from acquisition of the targeted collections to project planning, processing, cataloging, outreach, and outcomes. The relevant institutional frameworks of each project were also taken into consideration. The research team hypothesized that the more that is understood about scholarly engagement within

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<sup>2</sup> James M. O’ Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding archives & manuscripts* (Society of American Archivists, 2006), p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Jerome McGann, *The Scholar’s Art: Literary Studies in a Managed World* (University of Chicago, 2006), p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, the stories of archival discoveries told by scholars in the book of essays, *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process* (Southern Illinois University, 2008), edited by Gesa E. Kirsch and Liz Rohan, with a forward by Lucille M. Schultz. In particular, the scholars emphasize the significance of discovery, serendipity, passion, etc. in the research process.

these diverse contexts, the greater the ability of cultural institutions to both facilitate and document outcomes of use. Better data on outcomes will, in turn, help libraries and archives demonstrate the significance of preserving, cataloging, and providing access to rare and unique materials.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, by gaining insight into how best to leverage the complementary skills of librarians, archivists, and scholars, institutions will be in a better position to tackle the monumental challenge of reducing the backlog of hidden collections, while encouraging the creation of new knowledge. In a nutshell, the team believes that by achieving a better understanding of scholarly engagement, cultural and academic institutions will be able to fashion more sustainable and consequential futures for libraries and archives.

The research team itself is made up of six past or current recipients of CLIR's Postdoctoral Fellowships in Academic Libraries. Each study team member holds a Ph.D., has teaching experience, and currently works in libraries and archives. Half of the team also holds a master's degree in library and information science. The team advisor was Christa Williford, Ph.D., M.L.I.S., who is employed by CLIR and is also an alumna of the fellowship program. CLIR Fellows are trained to pay particular attention to the distinct roles that librarians, archivists, and scholars play within cultural and educational institutions and to promote productive dialogue between these synergistic professions. This report aims to put CLIR training into action while encouraging conversations across professional and disciplinary boundaries about the preservation, sustainability, and growth of special collections and archives.

### 2008 Grant Recipients

A full list of the 2008 grant recipients and brief project descriptions can be found on CLIR's website: <http://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/awards/index2008.html>

In this report, any information that would identify institutions or individuals has been removed; instead, the report focuses on a description of processes.

### Methodology

- *Created and conducted an online survey of award recipients (April – May 2009).* The online survey asked questions about primary users, services provided, assessment, and the extent of scholars' involvement in the grant proposal and project development. All sixteen of the Principal Investigators for the fifteen funded projects were contacted, and sixteen responses were received.<sup>6</sup> Analysis of responses to the survey is included in this report (see below). For the survey findings and instrument, see Appendices A and B.
- *Organized and conducted a seminar, "Finding Common Ground: CLIR Postdoctoral Fellows on Scholarly Engagement with Hidden Special Collections and Archives," at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Preconference, June 17-20, 2009, in Charlottesville, Virginia.* Team members Kelly Miller, Gabrielle Dean, Patricia Hswe, and Christa Williford presented preliminary findings of the survey at this seminar. The key

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<sup>5</sup> According to the ARL, libraries and archives need to determine "ways to illustrate examples of how special collections contribute to innovative research, teaching, and learning." See, 2007 Working Group Charge, see "Special Collections in ARL Libraries: A Discussion Report from the ARL Working Group on Special Collections," March 2009 [www.arl.org/bm~doc/scwg-report.pdf](http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/scwg-report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> In the case of one project involving a library consortium, the P.I. reported that more than one project representative had responded to the survey. For this reason, we know that our response rate was not actually 100%, but nearly so.

questions posed in the seminar were: “What is the role of the scholar in the 21st-century library and archival environment?” and “How do today’s librarians, archivists, and scholars interact with one another to realize their distinct professional goals?”

- *Conducted one-day site visits (August 2009 – February 2010).* One to two members of the team attended each site visit.<sup>7</sup> A typical site visit included a presentation by the study team, interviews with the project staff, interviews with scholars, tours of the library or archive, including processing locations, and an opportunity to see samples of items from the targeted collections. A critical aspect of the site visits was the opportunity to bring together key administrators, full-time and part-time project staff, and scholars for discussion with one another about the project.
- *Convened a workshop on “scholarly engagement” at the “Hidden Collections Program Symposium,” a joint gathering of 2008 and 2009 award recipients, held in Washington, D.C. (March 29, 2010).* Kelly Miller presented the findings of the study of the first year’s funded projects, followed by a discussion of these findings among participants in small groups.
- *Drafted final report on the study for dissemination to CLIR and the project teams (March – April 2010).*

### Significance of scholarly use of special collections and archives

The survey and site visit data showed that scholars are significant users of libraries and archives. Moreover, results showed that scholarly use of special collections and archives was of critical importance to the institutions surveyed. According to the survey, scholarly use of collections was included in the mission and/or strategic plan of 94% of the special collections libraries and archives. The data also demonstrated that projects will measure their success, in part, by the level of scholarly use of the targeted collections.

### Institutional Contexts

The institutional contexts of the 2008 projects vary in almost every way. The projects’ home institutions range from public research universities to private liberal arts colleges, and from public libraries to historical societies. Leadership and staffing models, user communities, and funding streams also vary dramatically. The targeted collections themselves are also diverse in both subject matter (history, literature, politics, medicine, botany, etc.) and format (manuscripts, books, maps, photographs, ephemera, etc.). Ultimately, what connects these projects is not their institutional homes, but their common needs. By providing financial resources to support processing and cataloging of hidden collections, the current CLIR program is fulfilling one critical need, at least, temporarily. The program is also providing opportunities for librarians and archivists to experiment with new workflows, processing models, and technologies.

Institutional context – whether in terms of the type, or location, of the institution, its organizational structure, staffing models, or user services – arguably affects the realization of projects. For example, larger institutions tend to have better resources and technical support for adapting new technologies; at the same time, efforts to implement technological innovation can be hindered by bureaucracy. Smaller, under-resourced institutions often must rely on limited in-house technical

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<sup>7</sup> Christa Williford also attended thirteen of the fifteen visits.

expertise, but they can also change more rapidly than their larger counterparts. The study also found that institutional environment has direct relevance to scholarly engagement in three areas: leadership models, types of user communities, and outreach models.

Scholarly expertise at the institutional leadership level varies according to the professional experience of library and archive directors at the projects' home institutions. For instance, one director was hired because of his subject expertise, ability to cultivate relationships with other researchers and donors, and to attract new acquisitions. Another director was selected on the basis of archival and library management expertise. Yet another director was chosen because of his previous experience in higher education as a director of corporate relations.

Special collections libraries and archives within academic institutions have built-in user communities of faculty and students. But they also grapple with balancing the research and curricular needs of these users with the needs of short-term or distance users. Depending on their physical, geographical location, public libraries and historical societies may or may not have easy access to academic communities. 88% of respondents identified academic faculty and graduate students from *outside* their institution, as well as independent researchers, as the primary users of their special collections libraries and archives. This suggests that special collections libraries and archives are serving a broad constituency beyond their institutional base. It also clarifies why identifying and anticipating user needs might be difficult. Other primary users acknowledged by the survey included academic faculty and graduate students from within the institution (63% and 56%, respectively), staff (56%), and undergraduates (44%). In a few situations, justifying support for external users is problematic, because the local institution views its faculty and students as its primary constituencies. Types of users mentioned during the site visits included academic faculty, K-12 teachers, students (high school, undergraduate, and graduate students), independent researchers, paid researchers, filmmakers, national and state government employees, lawyers, journalists, architects, authors, and donors.

The capabilities of outreach mechanisms, not unlike that of adopting technology as described above, depends on the size and type of institution. Outreach to public and independent researchers seemed more robust at non-academic institutions, such as historical societies, public libraries, and research institutes. For these typically smaller organizations, making connections with academic institutions was a struggle. Institutions, whether academic or non-academic, are at an advantage when they are networked with larger online archives, often sponsored by state governments, or are associated with research centers or institutes. Partnerships and consortial alliances with related libraries and museums are also factors.

More details about the impact of institutional context on this first cycle of "Hidden Collections" projects may be found in Appendix C.

### Scholarly Engagement in the Project Lifecycle [See Appendix D]

Based on the data collected, the research team identified the following project stages: 1) project origin, 2) planning, 3) training, 4) processing, 5) record creation, 6) outreach, and 7) outcomes. The series of seven stages was conceptualized as a lifecycle, in which collections are created, made accessible, and lead to the creation of new knowledge. For each stage, the team noted the ways in which scholarly engagement occurs; in some cases, the team drew conclusions from the observations and proposed further questions for consideration. Before describing each stage, it is

important to note that scholarly engagement occurs in external and internal modes, either in-person or virtually.

#### *External and internal modes of scholarly engagement*

According to the survey and site visit data, scholarly engagement occurs in two distinct modes within the project lifecycle: 1) externally, between project staff and scholar-users, and 2) internally, between members of project staffs, in which established or emerging subject expertise is embedded.

The research team found that external scholarly engagement may begin as early as the very outset of a project. For example, a scholar may bring the existence of a collection to the attention of a librarian, who then works with the scholar to acquire it. Mechanisms for scholarly engagement can also be built into the very design of projects. For instance, scholars may be included on project advisory committees and, thereby, inform decisions made in project planning and implementation. External scholars can also serve as project consultants, providing subject expertise, including foreign language knowledge, as needed by catalogers and processors. In some projects, thanks to the availability of blogging and other technological innovations, the expertise of scholars is being solicited heavily in the processing and cataloging stages.

Internal scholarly engagement with collections occurs in several ways. Project teams, including the principal investigator, catalogers, and archivists, may not only have library or archival degrees, but also subject expertise related to the targeted collections. These staff members may produce outcomes, such as publications. Internal scholarly engagement also includes the hiring of project archivists and graduate students with related subject expertise, who are encouraged not only to process and catalog collections, but also to contribute articles about the collections to online encyclopedias. Students with subject expertise may eventually choose to write theses or dissertations on the collections and later publish and teach using the collections. For this reason, the research team viewed the students working on the projects as potential "emerging scholars" whose engagement could result in increased use of collections. Team-processing models seem to enhance the experience of emerging scholars by providing opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers and with professional archivists. These projects are, thus, not only resulting in access to newly cataloged collections, but also providing emerging scholars with extended opportunities for contact with original sources and exposure to archival processing and methods. Moreover, they are productively testing out the ways in which students can "be called into service to describe [...] collections with a modicum of training and professional guidance."<sup>8</sup>

#### *In-person and virtual scholarly engagement*

The research team also observed that scholarly engagement occurs both in-person and virtually. In-person scholarly engagement is particularly evident in early stages of the project, namely project origin and planning. In the processing and cataloging stages, social-networking tools, such as blogs, are being implemented to encourage scholarly engagement. Outreach mechanisms, both traditional and digital, involve both in-person and virtual forms of scholarly engagement.

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<sup>8</sup> "The experienced librarian or archivist knows that by presenting a collection to users, it may be possible to learn from the users just how much further description of that material might be desirable. Faculty and graduate students quarrying neglected collections for new sources may be called into service to describe those collections with a modicum of training and professional guidance." See, "Special Collections in ARL Libraries: A Discussion Report from the ARL Working Group on Special Collections," March 2009

[www.arl.org/bm~doc/scwg-report.pdf](http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/scwg-report.pdf)

## **1. Project Origin**

### *Creation and acquisition of collections*

Scholars were often involved in creation and/or acquisition of the targeted collections. Some of these same scholars planned to use the cataloged collections in their own research and/or teaching. Project staff tended to perceive these scholars as being capable of bringing attention to the collections.

### *Preliminary use and selection of collections for the project*

In one instance, a scholar who aided the acquisition of the targeted collection also advised on its initial rough organization. In a number of cases, scholars had already conducted research on the collections; indeed, 75% of the libraries and archives surveyed drew on usage data to select collection(s) for the project. A discussion of the types of usage data and techniques to collect that data can be found in a subsequent portion of the report. In addition to consulting usage data, several project teams explained that their collections were deemed to have “high research value,” with potential appeal to scholars in multiple disciplines. In some cases, the research value of a collection was determined by the opinion of scholars. In others, a research value assessment tool – created within the library and archival community to anticipate the broadest possible range of uses – was applied to the collections by project staff. Such tools are employed, in part, because of a perception within the library and archival community that individual scholars may have difficulty evaluating collections beyond the lens of their own interests and disciplines.

### *Project Leadership*

In some cases, the Principal Investigator and supervisory staff have relevant subject expertise in the targeted collections; in other projects, the project leaders are professional librarians and/or archivists, who may or may not have relevant subject expertise.

## **2. Planning**

### *Choice of project recommenders for the grant application*

The individuals chosen by the institutions to write recommendations in support of the grant application to CLIR were frequently key scholars who planned to use the collection themselves. According to the survey, individuals who wrote letters of recommendation for the project were selected based on the following: 1) their subject expertise (100%); 2) their knowledge of specific collections targeted for the grant (69%); or 3) their previous experience working with librarians or archivists involved in project (62%). Other criteria for selecting references included having a Ph.D. or terminal degree (31%), a recommendation from a colleague involved in the project (25%), and a recommendation from a colleague outside of the project (19%). Only one library/archive (6% of total respondents) identified knowledge of cataloging technologies or metadata as a determining factor. During site visits, the study team also learned that individuals were selected, in part, because of their demonstrated ability to serve as advocates for the collections, that is, to promote awareness and understand of the collections, to raise funds to support the collections, and to acquire new materials.

### **3. Training**

#### *Project staff selection*

Archivists and processing assistants contracted specifically for work on the funded projects were hired on the basis of varied criteria, including availability, processing experience, adaptability to the work environment, subject expertise, including knowledge of foreign languages. The survey and site visit data show no strong consensus about which of these criteria was the most important consideration for hiring committees. For instance, some institutions chose to hire project archivists with undergraduate or graduate degrees in disciplines related to the collections, while others chose to hire archivists without any expertise in the subject matter of the targeted collections.

#### *Selection of Project Archivists*

At four institutions, project archivists were selected for their combination of professional archival training and subject knowledge. At one institution, staff observed that an archivist with relevant subject expertise is in an excellent position to serve as liaison between collections and eventual expert users. In one case, the project archivist has a Ph.D. in a related subject area and produces scholarly publications herself. At other institutions, project archivists were chosen for their professional expertise, but not necessarily for any related subject expertise. In some cases, project staff had language expertise that was pertinent to the targeted collections. In others, the project staff did not have language expertise that was necessary to identify materials and expressed concern about how to resolve that problem.

#### *Selection of Student Assistants*

In projects that recruited student workers, some hired only graduate students as processors; some only undergraduate students; and others hired a combination. Some institutions hired students who had subject-related interests; others chose not to recruit students who had subject-related interests. In other cases, graduate students were chosen for their status as information/library school students, not for their subject expertise. In these situations, students create minimal records; later, subject experts who use the collections may add description.

#### *Specific elements of training that relate to scholarly engagement*

In some cases, training of project staff includes an orientation to the subject matter of collections either through exposure to literature by scholars and/or meetings with scholars.

### **4. Processing**

#### *Team processing and internal scholarly engagement*

Multiple institutions are implementing team approaches to processing. The organization of the teams and their working models varies, but, typically, it includes a supervisor, project archivist, and student assistants working in physical proximity that allows for frequent interaction. In cases where the teams involve internal subject experts or emerging subject experts (undergraduates or graduates studying the subject of targeted collections), an internal mode of scholarly engagement is occurring. Initial outcomes of such engagement include articles about the collections included in online encyclopedias and blog posts. Some students may eventually write theses or dissertations on the collections. During the symposium, a question was raised about whether a finding aid, itself, may be considered a form of scholarly communication, one able to be described as an outcome of internal

scholarly engagement with targeted collections.

#### *Views on the role of subject expertise in processing*

Special collections libraries and archives appear to be grappling with changing views on the role of subject expertise in processing. Indeed, experimentation with the usefulness and applicability of the “more product, less process” (MPLP) approach<sup>9</sup> to processing seems to be foregrounding the question of the relevance of subject expertise: How much subject expertise, if any, is required for processing? Is processing a scholarly act that requires subject expertise? Or does subject expertise hinder efficiencies in processing? Are there effective training models that leverage both subject expertise and the professional training of archivists and librarians? The ways in which a particular library/archive answers these questions inevitably affect decision-making about project hiring practices, training, and expectations for progress. Several institutions are applying various analytical tools to better understand the effects of MPLP on users. The results of such investigations will undoubtedly inform decision-making about how much subject expertise should be embedded in the processing stage of the project.

#### *Processing as stimulus for outreach*

Some project staff observed that ideas for outreach arose naturally in the course of processing. In some projects, processors were explicitly encouraged to note items that might be of particular interest to known users or appropriate for future exhibits.

#### *Physical access for scholars to semi-processed collections*

At one institution at least, physical access to semi-processed collections was provided for scholars. A more common practice was to restrict access until the collection was completely processed and cataloged.

## **5. Record Creation**

#### *Views on the role of subject expertise in record creation*

Our team observed that changing views on cataloging are manifested in the diverse approaches that projects are taking to this stage of the project lifecycle. In some projects, cataloging is considered a scholarly act of description requiring either internal staff subject expertise, consultation with external scholars, or a combination of both. In other projects, an emphasis on increasing the speed with which collections are made accessible tends to downplay the role of subject expertise and limit scholarly engagement at this stage. In these cases, the assumption is that the subject expert tends to supply more extensive description and, thus, slows down the cataloging process. Implicit in some of the project plans where staff have prioritized access over description is a hope that technological innovations such as user tagging, information harvested at point of use, student course activities, feedback channels, or simply the good will of experts will eventually enhance the minimal descriptions currently being produced. In one case, the project team is already realizing this hope by actively “crowd-sourcing” knowledge from external scholars through use of a blog. Many institutions employed paper forms that reading room visitors could use to correct or enhance cataloging information.

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<sup>9</sup> Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, “More Product, Less Process: Pragmatically Revamping Traditional Processing Approaches to Deal with Late 20th-Century Collections.” *American Archivist* 68.2 (2005): 208-263.

## 6. Outreach

Most projects had not yet reached the outreach or outcomes stages when the survey and site visits were completed. Nonetheless, outreach strategies were discussed during the site visits; among the topics addressed were project plans for outreach and outcomes and existing institutional support for these stages. Some institutions already have vigorous outreach programs; others have limited outreach, but would like to do more; others, because of their geographical location or status, do not conduct extensive outreach and see less need for it. In some cases, specific staff members are tasked with outreach; in others, outreach is seen as primarily the director's role; in others, responsibility for outreach is spread throughout the staff.

Generally, outreach is geared toward all users rather than specific types of users. However, the research team noted that in the institutional outreach practices observed or described, scholars play significant roles in key activities – as speakers, teachers, authors, and exhibit curators. Moreover, some institutions have established project outreach advisory boards made up of staff, donors, scholars, and other users; these boards are used to generate ideas, collaborations, and funding for outreach activities. Some institutions also have affiliated research centers that conduct scholarly outreach for collections through fellowships, visiting lectures, and seminars.

### *Existing and/or planned outreach mechanisms for the projects*

In the lists of outreach mechanisms found below, an asterisk is used to denote those mechanisms that especially encourage substantive exchanges of information between librarians/archivists and users, that is, interactions that involve a *two-way exchange* of information.

Traditional outreach mechanisms that are being used – or will be used – to promote the use of targeted collections, include:

- print newsletter
- print publications
- tours and/or “show-and-tells”: Prior to the processing of collections, some users have had exposure to targeted collections through “show-and-tells” and/or building tours. The project archivists show samples from the collections currently being processed. The goal of these tours is to create awareness of the collections and build interest in eventual use.
- lectures
- seminars\*
- symposia\*
- exhibits
- fellowships\*
- conference presentations

Less traditional, but increasingly common outreach mechanisms that are being used – or will be used – to promote the use of targeted collections, include:

- websites
- e-newsletters
- blogs
- pages on social networking sites (Facebook)\*

- wikis\*
- online exhibits
- awards for undergraduate use of collections\*
- linking online finding aids to online research guides, exhibits, publications, etc.
- allowing user tags on finding aids\*

The research team hypothesizes that outreach will be most effective – that is, lead to outcomes and transformations in research and teaching – when it involves a sustained and substantive *two-way exchange of information* between librarians/archivists and users. Such exchanges require shared interest/mutual curiosity, space and context for sustained conversation, access to primary resources, and exchange of information that facilitates discovery and outcomes. From this perspective, an e-newsletter informing users of a newly-accessible collection, would be significant as an advertising tool, but not yet involve a two-way exchange of information. Such exchanges benefit both parties; for instance, the librarian/archivist gains a better understanding of the needs of the scholar and users of the collections, while the scholar gains a better understanding of the materials available for study. Examples of outreach mechanisms that enable this sort of encounter include a virtual research consultation, a workshop with librarians/archivists and scholars focused on the collection, and user tagging of a finding aid.

During the site visits, many project staff members expressed interest in identifying new, or more effective, approaches to outreach. The study team observed that meetings during the site visits themselves encouraged discussion of outreach and resulted in new ideas for ways to use and promote the collections.

## **7. Outcomes, Measures of Success**

For some institutions, gaining intellectual control over collections is the emphasis of the grant projects; for others, the opportunity to take the project to the next stage and digitize is emphasized; for others, use of physical objects is key. Regardless of these variations, institutions emphasized two kinds of desirable outcomes more than others: those that could be used internally as guides for improvement, and those focused on users and communities outside the institution.

Desired outcomes for internal improvements include:

- clearer measures of productivity
- clearer understanding of costs of processing a collection
- improved workflows
- improved coordination between separate units or divisions within the library/archive
- professional development for staff
- expression of relationships between items in collections, especially via online finding aids
- linking of related databases and digital projects, of materials in different formats (e.g. specimens, field notes, and photographs), and of collections across institutions.
- better understanding of MPLP effects on scholars/researchers
- identification of better standards for cataloging ephemera, maps, and posters
- identification of mechanisms for users to add description to finding aids (Web 2.0 tools)
- determination of sustainable future for the collections
- determination of sustainable funding for resulting digital projects

Desired outcomes for external visibility, use, and knowledge production include:

- increased visibility of the targeted collections
- increased use of targeted collections
- increased use of finding aids
- increased reference contacts and requests
- creation of new communities of creators, processors, and users of collections
- use of social-networking technologies to enhance research practices
- contributions to digital encyclopedias, sponsored by the state or region
- new publications
- new art work
- new community projects
- graduate-student use of collections for creation of new theses and dissertations
- undergraduate class use
- new partnerships with related libraries and museums
- new opportunities for fundraising and collection development

A number of institutions expressed interest in improving their ability to track outcomes of collection use beyond statistics, permissions, and anecdotes. Some institutions are experimenting with methods for capturing qualitative data in addition to quantitative data. Such experiments deserve attention and study, in order to improve the ways that libraries and archives are able to describe the results of their efforts.

Project staff also identified a need to understand better how to employ usage data for increased support. The study team observed that library staff tend to keep information, such as publication tracking, for internal purposes, rather than sharing it with the outside world. The study team believes that this information could be employed more strategically for marketing purposes.

The institutions currently make use of the following types of assessment practices and tools:

- use statistics: user counts
- user registration tools (registration form to interview)
- user surveys
- user focus groups
- records of publications and media productions resulting from use
- paper and electronic forms for users to suggest changes to finding aids
- applying Google Analytics to finding aids
- files of informal “thank you” letters or e-mails from users
- word-of-mouth
- Archival Metrics <http://archivalmetrics.org>

On site visits, project staff explained that usage data is employed in the following ways:

- to understand user communities more fully
- to inform future collection development priorities
- to create strategic plans
- to write annual reports
- to make internal justifications for increased staffing or resources
- to make justifications for support to donors and granting agencies

### *Increasing Use; Increasing Demand for Services*

Some questions about the impact of achieving targeted outcomes remain. If the goal of increasing the visibility of a collection is reached, how will the library provide corresponding services? Reference service, for example, may be more difficult if there are more users—although it may also be easier if users are better informed. If scholars contribute descriptive metadata, how would the results be evaluated? If new community projects or artworks result from increased use of collections, will institutions be able to leverage such opportunities to obtain new sources of funding and support? Such questions deserve further study as the “Hidden Collections” program evolves.

### Recommendations for special collections libraries and archives

The 2008 “Hidden Collections” grant projects are creating experimental models for how to engage scholars productively in the cataloging and processing of hidden special collections and archives. As this report has shown, scholarly engagement is occurring fairly robustly within these projects, in both traditional and novel ways. The research team believes that from within these projects a set of recommendations for effective practice – aimed at maximizing the productivity of newly cataloged collections – may tentatively be drawn. Case studies, written by selected grant projects, will be able to describe these models in greater detail and provide illustrative examples of how the models function in practice. This report is imagined as an introduction to such cases. As this study continues into its second year, the research team will be able to refine and augment these recommendations.

- Provide physical and/or virtual opportunities for project staff and scholars to engage with one another during *all* stages of the project lifecycle, including processing and cataloging. In cases where such engagement occurs, the benefits to the projects seem to outweigh the time such engagement requires. In other words, an emphasis on “less process” in the MPLP approach does not necessarily pertain to in-person engagement with users in the processing and cataloging stages; it might even require an increase in such engagement. This question deserves further study. Examples include:

**Team Processing.** Consider adopting team processing approaches that allow for engagement between professional archivists and librarians and potential or emerging scholars. [Case studies: Emory University; Goucher College.]

**Blogging/Crowd-Sourcing.** Consider adopting generic tools, not specifically designed for processing, in order to reach expert users more efficiently. [Case studies: George Mason University; the University of Michigan]

- Conduct outreach *as processing occurs*, thus, ensuring that outreach is thoroughly integrated into the project lifecycle rather than treated as a discrete end stage. [Case studies: Geography and Maps Division, Library of Congress; Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries]
- Capture metrics and track usage as exhaustively as possible in order to improve efficiency and strengthen connections with scholars. [Case studies: Center for the History of Medicine, Countway Library, Harvard Medical School]
- For the sake of advocacy, track usage and outcomes as exhaustively as possible, and consider sharing information about those outcomes publicly. [Case studies: Amistad

## Research Center]

- Consider adopting a set of outreach mechanisms, both in-person and virtual, that allows for a two-way exchange of information between librarians/archivists and scholars, such as seminars, workshops, wikis, and crowd-sourcing of scholarly expertise. [TBD in Year 2]
- Anticipating later digitization of these collections, consider creating opportunities for structured engagement between processors and catalogers of the physical objects and the subject experts who are currently making use of similar original sources in digital research and scholarship. Question: *What if physical collections were cataloged in such a way as to meet the more speculative imaginings of scholars and technologists about future online archives?* [TBD in Year 2]

## Recommendation for CLIR

- Consider advocating curricular changes in U.S. graduate training for scholars, librarians, and archivists, to include courses that would a) for scholars, provide introduction to research in libraries and archives, and also introduction to library and archival values, and b) for librarians and archivists, provide courses that offer an introduction and exposure to the research process, as well as an understanding of scholars' values. What would such a course look like? What would the readings be? What kinds of interviews/conversations/discussions could take place? Could such a course be taught in Rare Books School? Could such courses be taught together to maximize opportunities for engagement across professional cultures? [May be a potential CLIR Postdoctoral Fellowship Project.]

## Research Team

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## Appendix A

### Observations on Scholarly Engagement with Hidden Special Collections and Archives:

#### Results of Survey of 2008 Principal Investigators

Our online survey asked questions about primary users, services provided to researchers, the assessment of those services, and the extent of scholars' involvement in the grant proposal and project development [see Appendix B for survey questions]. We contacted all 16 of the Principal Investigators assigned to the pool of 15 projects awarded funds in 2008, and we received 16 responses. In the case of one project involving a library consortium, a Principal Investigator reported that more than one project representative had responded to the survey. For this reason, we know that our response rate was not actually 100%, but nearly so.

#### Part One: Users of Special Collections Libraries and Archives

[Question 1]: 88% of respondents identified academic faculty and graduate students from *outside* their institution and independent researchers as the primary users of their special collections libraries and archives. This suggests that special collections libraries and archives are serving a broad constituency beyond their institutional base. It also clarifies why it might be difficult to identify and anticipate the user needs. Other primary users identified included academic faculty and graduate students from within the institution (63% and 56%, respectively), staff (56%), and undergraduates (44%).

1. Who are the primary users of your institutional (or consortial) collections? Choose only those groups your institution or consortium serves in significant enough numbers to affect your planning for projects and services.			
academic faculty from within my institution (or consortium)		10	62%
academic faculty from outside my institution (or consortium)		14	88%
graduate students from within my institution (or consortium)		9	56%
graduate students from outside my institution (or consortium)		14	88%
undergraduate students within my institution (or consortium)		7	44%
undergraduate students outside my institution (or consortium)		7	44%
elementary and secondary school teachers and students		6	38%
independent researchers		14	88%
members of a professional group, such as medical doctors or lawyers		2	12%
staff members at my institution (or in my consortium)		9	56%
government officials		1	6%
local community members		7	44%
genealogical researchers		5	31%
Other, please specify: <a href="#">View Responses</a>		3	19%

Other key users mentioned by respondents included museum curators, printers, authors, and people holding membership in the sponsoring institution.

[Question 2]: Scholarly use of collections was included in the mission and/or strategic plan of 94% of the special collections libraries and archives surveyed. This was generally the case for grant recipients based at independent libraries, research centers, or historical societies as well as those affiliated with academic institutions.

2. Does the involvement of scholars in your project relate to your institution's (or your consortium's) stated mission or strategic plan? (Again, the term scholar refers broadly to those who actively engage in research and/or teaching as subject specialists, such as academic faculty, graduate students, independent researchers, subject librarians or archivists, artists, and others.)			
Yes		15	94%
No		1	6%
Total		16	100%
<a href="#">View 13 Responses</a>			

## Services for Users

[Question 3]: The libraries and archives surveyed provided a range of access points and services for researchers. Some of the more common services included:

- In-person, phone, and e-mail reference (100%)
- Consultation (94%)
- Library instruction for classes (69%)
- Educational programs (81%)
- Tours (75%)
- Reading room access (94%)
- Patron accessible computers (100%)
- Interlibrary loan (75%)
- Scanning and/or digitization (100%)
- Photocopying (94%)

While less common services for researchers included:

- Education programs by research fellows or visitors (62%)
- Digital scholarship support (38%)
- Copyright and intellectual property consultation (38%)
- Purchase requests (44%)
- Electronic equipment check out (including digital cameras, scanners, or laptops) (38%)
- Grant writing support (31%)

3. What services does your institution currently provide to scholars? Choose all that apply.			
in-person reference services		16	100%
telephone or email reference services		16	100%
collections tours		12	75%
facilities tours		12	75%
in-person research consultations		15	94%
research services (conducting research on behalf of patrons)		10	62%
library instruction for individual courses		11	69%
digital scholarship support (help with instructional and research technologies)		6	38%
purchase requests		7	44%
interlibrary loan		12	75%
copyright and intellectual property consultations		6	38%
photocopying requests		15	94%
scanning and/or digitization requests		16	100%
reading room access		15	94%
wireless internet access		14	88%
borrowing of electronic equipment, including digital cameras, scanners, or laptops		6	38%
patron-accessible computers		16	100%
access to research tools, such as pencils, scrap paper, magnifying glasses, and book supports		15	94%
educational programs conducted by staff		13	81%
educational programs conducted by fellow researchers or visitors		10	62%
exhibits		16	100%
exhibit tour requests		12	75%
opportunity to apply for grants or fellowships managed by your institution		5	31%
Other, please specify: <a href="#">View Responses</a>		4	25%

Other services mentioned by respondents include fellowships, housing, and photo research.

[Question 4]: Assessment of user services was varied among respondents, with a high majority (75%) reporting some form of assessment. Methodologies named by respondents include: tracking numbers of individual users and paged materials; recording research topics of users; keeping letters and email from users; tracking reproduction requests; conducting user surveys and hosting focus groups; conducting exit surveys; and submitting monthly, semesterly, or annual reports on usage.

4. Does your institution currently assess its services for scholars?			
Yes		12	75%
No		4	25%
Total		16	100%
<a href="#">View 12 Responses</a>			

[Question 5]: A high majority of respondents reported that the grant-funded project would affect user services, with most of these indicating that it would improve access to materials, but some also reporting the project would temporarily make some collections inaccessible. Other effects of project implementation reported by the group include: increased demand for materials and more open hours; decreased ability of staff to provide personalized service to users; the incorporation of scholars into the assessment and refinement of catalog records and finding aids; and the adoption of new software.

5. Will the current project affect any services provided for scholars?			
Yes		14	93%
No		1	7%
Total		15	100%
<a href="#">View 14 Responses</a>			

## Part Two: Project Development

[Question 6]: Most grant recipients learned about the Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program through email, with others reported learning about the program from colleagues, a printed announcement, or the CLIR web site.

6. How did you find out about the Hidden Collections grant program? Choose all that apply.			
the CLIR web site		3	19%
a web site other than CLIR's site		0	0%
an email		10	62%
a print announcement		4	25%
a conference presentation		1	6%
a colleague		8	50%
Other, please specify: <a href="#">View Responses</a>		3	19%

[Question 7]: When selecting individuals to write letters of support for their grant proposals, principal investigators reported making their selections of authors based on 1) their subject expertise (100%), 2) their knowledge of specific collections targeted for the grant (69%), or 3) their previous experience working with librarians or archivists involved in project (62%). Thus knowledge of the field and targeted collections and familiarity with project librarians and archivists were primary criteria. Other criteria for selecting references included having a Ph.D. or terminal degree (31%), a recommendation from a colleague involved in the project (25%), and a recommendation from colleague outside of the project (19%). Reasons mentioned by only one respondent included the author’s knowledge of cataloging technologies or metadata, affiliation with the holding institution, knowledge of the institution, and recent use of the library or archive.

7. What were your criteria for determining the selection of the three individuals who supported your proposal with letters of recommendation? Choose all that apply.			
subject expertise		16	100%
Ph.D. or other terminal degree in subject area		5	31%
Masters degree or other advanced degree in subject area		0	0%
knowledge of cataloging technologies or metadata formats described in your proposal		1	6%
Masters degree in library science, information science, or related area		0	0%
formal affiliation with your institution		1	6%
knowledge of the targeted collection		11	69%
previous experience working closely with librarians or archivists involved in the project		10	62%
good recommendation from librarians or archivists involved in the project		4	25%
good recommendation from a colleague or friend not involved in the project		3	19%
Other, please specify: <a href="#">View Responses</a>		2	12%

### Part Three: Scholarly Involvement in Projects

[Question 8]: While responses indicated that individuals with some sort of scholarly credential were very frequently asked to write letters of recommendation, the selected authors were much less likely to be involved in the project itself. Those reporting some degree of involvement indicated they planned to consult those authors informally during the course of the project, appointing them as members of an advisory board, inviting them to participate in the evaluation of project outcomes, inviting them to attend project-related discussions, or providing of training for students involved with the project. One respondent reported that a scholar’s current work was closely connected to the cataloging project and that person’s continuing requests for materials “will continue to advance the broad direction of the project.”

8. Will any of the individuals who provided recommendations be involved in the project itself?			
Yes		5	33%
No		10	67%
Total		15	100%
<a href="#">View 6 Responses</a>			

[Question 9]: The number of respondents that reported keeping usage data (75%) was equal to the number of respondents who reported that such data was important to the selection of the hidden collections described in grant proposals. Of those who gave specific explanations of their selections, there were varied responses. Some reported that low use due to the unprocessed nature of collections was a concern that motivated the project, while others had documented a high demand among users. Some respondents described a general demand for materials related to the subject matter of the collection, while others reported user requests for specific collections.

9. Did usage data for your collections (whether anecdotal or formally captured) affect your selection of the hidden collection(s) described in your proposal?			
Yes		12	75%
No		4	25%
Total		16	100%
<a href="#">View 11 Responses</a>			

[Questions 10-12]: Scholars had varying degrees of involvement in the identification of targeted of collections, drafting of grant proposal, and selection of technology. Intensive involvement was atypical, and only one institution involved a scholar intensively in all three areas. Scholars were primarily involved 1) in drafting a grant proposal, 2) in selecting technology to support the projects, 3) in selecting hidden collections to process. Only 33% of the institutions surveyed stated that scholars would be involved in the project itself. In other words, scholars were less likely to be involved in activities such as training catalogers, project oversight, and project outreach.

Reflecting the variety of institutional contexts in which the grant projects are based, responses to the series of questions about scholarly involvement showed a whole range relationships to scholars, with some signaling a high degree of access to and need for scholarly input and others low accessibility and need. There was also some confusion about who might or might not be considered a “scholar.” “Frankly, though I am an archivist,” said one respondent about selecting collections for the project, “I am a scholar, too, so I wore both hats in the process.” The subject expertise of project staff was mentioned in many of the optional written responses to these questions, as was the subject expertise of staff or students hired specifically to work on the project. When in-house scholarly expertise was not available or acquired, consultations with outside experts on both subject-related and technical issues were frequently mentioned, as were publications, presentations, or other events into which library staff would incorporate scholars. Other responses indicated less formal contributions, such as “encouragement.” For some project activities, respondents were unsure how to predict the level of scholarly involvement, as to whether scholars might be involved in project evaluation, one wrote, “[it is] hard to say, since we are not at that stage yet.” Two out of the three individuals who reported types of scholarly involvement not already listed in the questions reported scholar-staff collaboration on specific humanities research projects that were related to the collections being cataloged.

**10.** To what extent were scholars involved in the following project planning activities? Select one of the four options and, when possible, please explain the nature of the involvement in the comment space provided.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	NO INVOLVEMENT	MINIMAL INVOLVEMENT	SOME INVOLVEMENT	INTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT
Selection of hidden collection(s) to process	2 13%	5 33%	7 47%	1 7%
Drafting of grant proposal	7 47%	4 27%	3 20%	1 7%
Selection of technology to support the project (e.g. archival management software)	8 53%	2 13%	4 27%	1 7%

[View 10 Responses](#)

**11.** To what extent are scholars involved in the following aspects of project execution? Select one of the four options and, when possible, please explain the nature of the involvement in the comment space provided.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	NO INVOLVEMENT	MINIMAL INVOLVEMENT	SOME INVOLVEMENT	INTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT
Training of catalogers	9 56%	3 19%	3 19%	1 6%
Cataloging/processing of collections	4 25%	5 31%	6 38%	1 6%
Project oversight	9 56%	3 19%	2 12%	2 12%
Project outreach (lectures, exhibits, publications, conference presentations, etc.)	4 25%	4 25%	8 50%	0 0%
Project review/evaluation	4 29%	4 29%	6 43%	0 0%

[View 14 Responses](#)

**12.** Are scholars involved in any other aspect of your project that was not mentioned above?

Yes		3	19%
No		13	81%
Total		16	100%

[View 3 Responses](#)

## Success Factors

[Question 13]: Increased scholarly interest in and use of targeted collections was identified as a “success factor” by all respondents. Other factors included the adoption of project technologies and/or methods of cataloging (88%), increased visits to the project website (75%), increased use of targeted collections for teaching (69%) and the creation of art works (62%). Less frequently cited factors included the user of targeted collections by scholars or students involved with projects (56%) and publicity about the project generated by others (56%).

13. What success factors, if any, do you anticipate establishing for your grant project? (Please note that in your original grant application you were not required to submit a post-project evaluation plan. This question is only meant to gather information about how you may or may not be planning to evaluate your project.) Choose all that apply.			
new or increased use of the targeted collections by individuals at your institution(s)		15	94%
new or increased use of the targeted collections by individuals from outside your institution(s)		16	100%
new or increased use of targeted collections in teaching		11	69%
use of the targeted collections by scholars or students who are involved with the project		9	56%
increasing numbers of requests for information related to the collections		16	100%
increasing numbers of visits to a project website		12	75%
publicity generated by others (not involved with the project)		9	56%
use of the targeted collections in, or as inspiration for, new creative works (literature, film, music, visual arts, etc.)		10	62%
adoption of project technologies and/or methods in future cataloging initiatives at your institution		14	88%
adoption of project technologies and/or methods for cataloging initiatives at other institutions (not involved with the project)		11	69%
Other, please specify: <a href="#">View Responses</a>		4	25%

[Question 14]: When given an opportunity to supply additional comments to investigators, one respondent reported, “We are not a university, so the level of scholarly involvement will be less than for an institution with scholars on staff. We hope that the project will bring new scholars to our library to use this material.” Another indicated a desire to learn more about potential ways to engage scholars in cataloging projects. “We haven't really focused on involving scholars in the project, so welcome any insights and suggestions.”

14. Are there any other comments you would like to add that would help us understand the ways in which your project will involve scholars?	
<a href="#">View 4 Responses</a>	

### Concluding Questions:

The investigative team did a preliminary analysis of survey results in preparation for a conference presentation and a series of site visits with project staff. The following are the five key findings they identified from the survey:

1. Scholars are the primary users of special collections libraries/archives.
2. Scholarly use of special collections is part of the essential mission of special collections libraries/archives.
3. New or increased scholarly use of hidden collections is one of the success factors identified by nearly all of the Hidden Collections cataloging projects.
4. The 2008 Hidden Collections projects employ various approaches to the involvement of scholars in the cataloging and processing of collections.
5. Means of documenting scholarly use of collections is not yet standardized or ubiquitous.

The team identified the following questions for further exploration during the site visits:

1. How are relationships between librarians and scholars currently structured within the special collections library and archival environment? How do these structures encourage or discourage interaction/engagement?
2. How much scholarly use results from informal conversations or encounters between the scholars and librarians/archivists? What circumstances, events, or activities encourage such conversations?
3. What are the most range of types of outcomes of scholarly use of special collections and archives?
4. Are these outcomes being tracked?
5. What can be done to better document outcomes?

## Scholarly Engagement With Special Collections and Archives

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### 1 Who are the primary users of your institutional (or consortial) collections?

Choose only those groups your institution or consortium serves in significant enough numbers to affect your planning for projects and services.

- academic faculty from within my institution (or consortium)
- academic faculty from outside my institution (or consortium)
- graduate students from within my institution (or consortium)
- graduate students from outside my institution (or consortium)
- undergraduate students within my institution (or consortium)
- undergraduate students outside my institution (or consortium)
- elementary and secondary school teachers and students
- independent researchers
- members of a professional group, such as medical doctors or lawyers
- staff members at my institution (or in my consortium)
- government officials
- local community members
- genealogical researchers
- Other, please specify:

### 2 Does the involvement of scholars in your project relate to your institution's (or your consortium's) stated mission or strategic plan?

(Again, the term *scholar* refers broadly to those who actively engage in research and/or teaching as subject specialists, such as academic faculty, graduate students, independent researchers, subject librarians or archivists, artists, and others.)

YES  NO

If yes, describe how:

**3 What services does your institution currently provide to scholars?**

Choose all that apply.

- in-person reference services
- telephone or email reference services
- collections tours
- facilities tours
- in-person research consultations
- research services (conducting research on behalf of patrons)
- library instruction for individual courses
- digital scholarship support (help with instructional and research technologies)
- purchase requests
- interlibrary loan
- copyright and intellectual property consultations
- photocopying requests
- scanning and/or digitization requests
- reading room access
- wireless internet access
- borrowing of electronic equipment, including digital cameras, scanners, or laptops
- patron-accessible computers
- access to research tools, such as pencils, scrap paper, magnifying glasses, and book supports
- educational programs conducted by staff
- educational programs conducted by fellow researchers or visitors
- exhibits
- exhibit tour requests
- opportunity to apply for grants or fellowships managed by your institution
- Other, please specify:

---

**4 Does your institution currently assess its services for scholars?**

YES  NO

If so, how? (For example, conducting surveys, interviews, or focus groups, keeping statistics, etc.)

---

**5 Will the current project affect any services provided for scholars?**

YES  NO

If so, how?



Survey Page 1

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**Scholarly Engagement With Special Collections and Archives**

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**6 How did you find out about the Hidden Collections grant program?**

Choose all that apply.

- the CLIR web site
- a web site other than CLIR's site
- an email
- a print announcement
- a conference presentation
- a colleague
- Other, please specify:

---

**7 What were your criteria for determining the selection of the three individuals who supported your proposal with letters of recommendation?**

Choose all that apply.

- subject expertise
- Ph.D. or other terminal degree in subject area
- Masters degree or other advanced degree in subject area
- knowledge of cataloging technologies or metadata formats described in your proposal
- Masters degree in library science, information science, or related area
- formal affiliation with your institution
- knowledge of the targeted collection
- previous experience working closely with librarians or archivists involved in the project
- good recommendation from librarians or archivists involved in the project
- good recommendation from a colleague or friend not involved in the project
- Other, please specify:

---

**8 Will any of the individuals who provided recommendations be involved in the project itself?**

If so please describe the nature of their involvement:

---

**9 Did usage data for your collections (whether anecdotal or formally captured) affect your selection of the hidden collection(s) described in your proposal?**

If yes, please explain:



## Scholarly Engagement With Special Collections and Archives

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### 10 To what extent were scholars involved in the following project planning activities?

Select one of the four options and, when possible, please explain the nature of the involvement in the comment space provided.

1 NO INVOLVEMENT      2 MINIMAL INVOLVEMENT      3 SOME INVOLVEMENT      4 INTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT

---

#### Selection of hidden collection(s) to process

1       2       3       4

Comments:

---

#### Drafting of grant proposal

1       2       3       4

Comments:

---

#### Selection of technology to support the project (e.g. archival management software)

1       2       3       4

Comments:

---

### 11 To what extent are scholars involved in the following aspects of project execution?

Select one of the four options and, when possible, please explain the nature of the involvement in the comment space provided.

1 NO INVOLVEMENT      2 MINIMAL INVOLVEMENT      3 SOME INVOLVEMENT      4 INTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT

---

#### Training of catalogers

1       2       3       4

Comments:

---

#### Cataloging/processing of collections

1       2       3       4

Comments:

---

**Project oversight**

1       2       3       4

Comments:

---

**Project outreach (lectures, exhibits, publications, conference presentations, etc.)**

1       2       3       4

Comments:

---

**Project review/evaluation**

1       2       3       4

Comments:

---

**12 Are scholars involved in any other aspect of your project that was not mentioned above?**

YES     NO

If so, please describe:



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## Scholarly Engagement With Special Collections and Archives

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**13 What success factors, if any, do you anticipate establishing for your grant project? (Please note that in your original grant application you were not required to submit a post-project evaluation plan. This question is only meant to gather information about how you may or**

**may not be planning to evaluate your project.)**

Choose all that apply.

- new or increased use of the targeted collections by individuals at your institution(s)
- new or increased use of the targeted collections by individuals from outside your institution(s)
- new or increased use of targeted collections in teaching
- use of the targeted collections by scholars or students who are involved with the project
- increasing numbers of requests for information related to the collections
- increasing numbers of visits to a project website
- publicity generated by others (not involved with the project)
- use of the targeted collections in, or as inspiration for, new creative works (literature, film, music, visual arts, etc.)
- adoption of project technologies and/or methods in future cataloging initiatives at your institution
- adoption of project technologies and/or methods for cataloging initiatives at other institutions (not involved with the project)
- Other, please specify:

---

**14** Are there any other comments you would like to add that would help us understand the ways in which your project will involve scholars?



## **Appendix C: The Impact of Institutional Context**

### **Type of Institution**

Data: Larger institutions were viewed as having more significant resources, but slow to implement change due to complex bureaucracies. Smaller institutions were perceived as having fewer resources, but greater flexibility. Similarly, older institutions were perceived to be less agile than younger institutions, largely due to degree of precedent and tradition.

Observation: Consortial projects, in which members have found ways to work together to serve common interests, may serve as models for the Hidden Collections projects that are currently operating independently. For instance, in the consortia, larger institutions with significant resources, including technological capabilities and support, have provided assistance to smaller institutions with few resources, but significant collections.

Question: *What would a consortium of Hidden Collections projects look like? How would it function to enhance results?*

### **Location of Institution**

Data: Locations of the institutions vary from large cities with significant concentrations of higher education institutions to small towns at a distance from such institutions. Our study found that location affects the ability librarians and archivists to connect with scholars.

Observation: Working in partnership with scholars, libraries and archives in large cities might partner with smaller, more isolated institutions to raise the visibility of linked collections.

Question: *What mechanisms, including technologies, might exist to raise awareness of linked collections within scholarly communities?*

### **Space and Facilities**

Data: The amount and quality of space to house collections varies from institution to institution. Likewise, workspace for processing also varies. Some libraries and archives have room for their collections to grow and ample workspace; others are struggling considerably within tight space restrictions. As we know, these variations can have consequential effects on security and conservation.

Observation: Newly cataloged collections of demonstrated significance in teaching and research may serve to demonstrate the need for expanded space and more secure facilities.

Question: *Are there ways that the Hidden Collections community could consider helping its members to make such arguments?*

Data: The amount and quality of exhibit space varies quite dramatically from institution to institution.

Question: *Are there recommendations that might be made to libraries, especially in building planning, for exhibit spaces?*

### **Missions and Priorities**

Data: According to the survey, scholarly use of collections was included in the mission and/or strategic plan of 94% of the special collections libraries and archives surveyed.

Observation: Priorities for collecting and processing result from institutional missions that vary depending on the type of institution. For example, major academic institutions tend to focus on supporting faculty research, while liberal arts colleges focus on undergraduate curricular needs, and historical societies on supporting the work of independent researchers. However, as our survey demonstrates, scholarly engagement is critical to each, in the sense that all of these institutions depend on the work of expert users, especially as manifested in research and teaching.

### **Leadership models**

Data: The professional experience of the library and archive directors at the projects' home institutions varies. For instance, one director was hired because of his subject expertise, ability to cultivate relationships with other researchers and donors, and to attract new acquisitions. Another director was selected on the basis of archival and library management expertise. Yet another director was chosen because of his previous experience in higher education as a director of corporate relations.

Observation: In practice, there is no one professional skill set that defines what is necessary to be a leader of a library and archive, at least, in this sampling of Hidden Collections program participants. Ideally, it seems, a director would have a combination of subject expertise, library/archival management experience, and demonstrated ability to fundraise.

Question: *Are these complementary skill sets being taught in library and information schools? Are there ways that these skills might be integrated into academic graduate programs? Is there a hybrid program that might be created to foster this sort of robust leadership model?*

### **Organizational structures**

Data: Projects differ in the degree to which they have support from their institutions. For example, one project receives much support – including funds to digitize manuscripts – from library administration. The project staff at the institution noted that they do not see any end to this project, but view it as an ongoing venture. Other projects are struggling for more administrative support. At institutions where special collections or archives are part of much larger libraries, staff members sometimes identified long-standing divisions between internal units.

Observation: There is general understanding that this needs to change – namely, the special collections/archives need to be more engaged with other library divisions, but there is uncertainty about the mechanisms for achieving that change.

### **Staffing models within special collections libraries and archives**

Data: The extent to which subject expertise is embedded within special collections libraries and archives differs greatly. In some cases, professional staff members frequently have advanced subject degrees. For instance, at one institution, four out of five catalogers hold Ph.D.s. Some special collections libraries and archives employ full-time outreach coordinators, who serve as the lead liaison to users, including scholars. The extent to which special collections libraries and archives rely on volunteer assistance also differs greatly. Some institutions could not be sustained without such assistance; in other cases, volunteers play only a marginal role. At some institutions, turnover in personnel had delayed progress. In one case, project staff described the problem of losing seasoned archivists with deep knowledge of collections.

Observation: Staffing models seem most successful when members of the staff have complementary expertise and abilities and are willing to offer assistance to others as needed. In these cases, staffing models included the following key elements: professional library and archival training, subject expertise, technology training, teaching experience, fundraising ability, and skill working with volunteers.

### **Services for Users**

The libraries and archives surveyed provided a range of access points and services for researchers. Some of the more common services included:

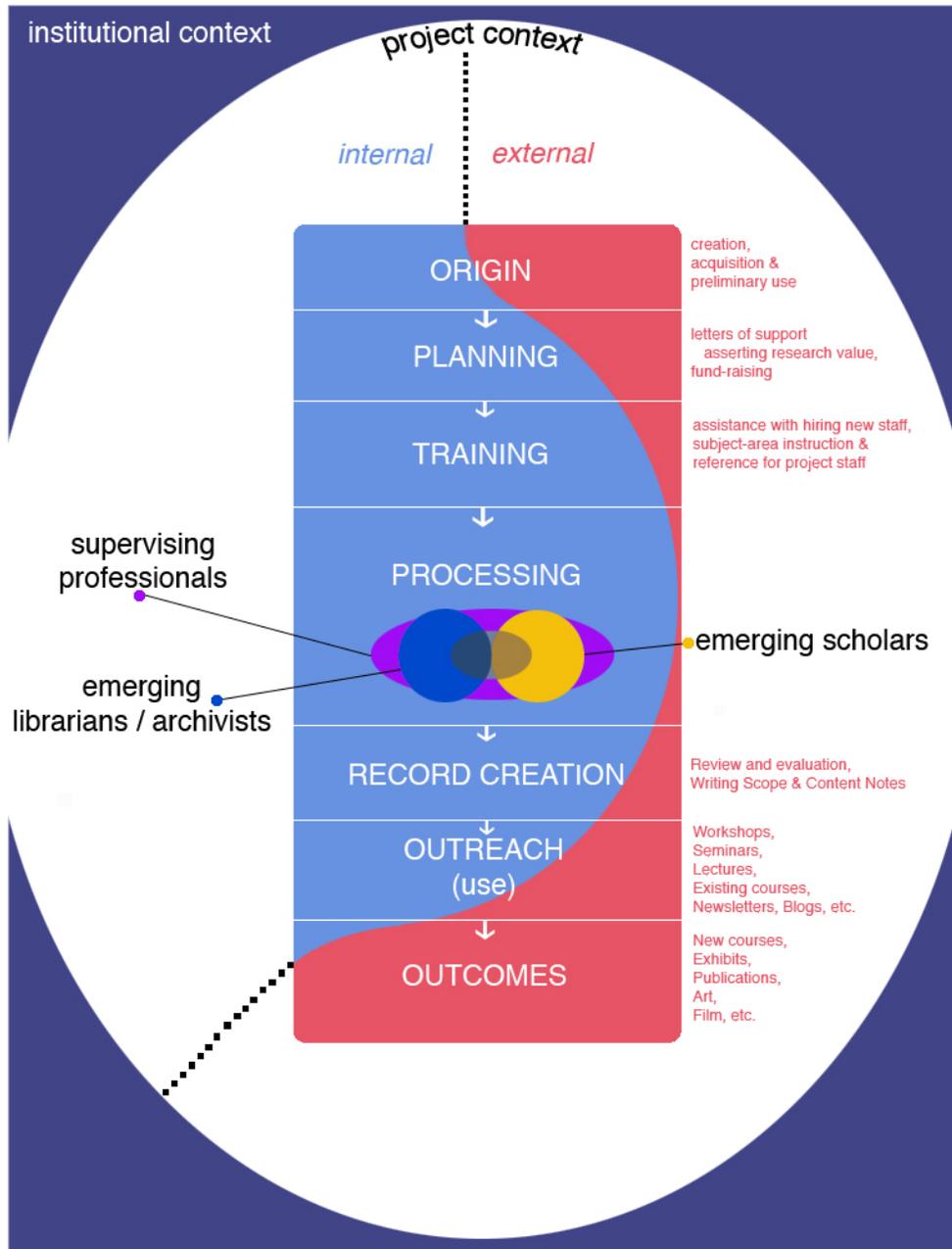
- In-person, phone, and e-mail reference (100%)
- Consultation (94%)
- Library instruction for classes (69%)
- Educational programs (81%)
- Tours (75%)
- Reading room access (94%)
- Patron accessible computers (100%)
- Interlibrary loan (75%)
- Scanning and/or digitization (100%)
- Photocopying (94%)

Less common services for researchers included:

- Education programs by research fellows or visitors (62%)
- Digital scholarship support (38%)
- Copyright and intellectual property consultation (38%)
- Purchase requests (44%)
- Electronic equipment check out (including digital cameras, scanners, or laptops) (38%)
- Grant writing support (31%)

# Appendix D

## SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT IN THE PROJECT LIFECYCLE



## Appendix E: Bibliography

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