

## **NCC 3-D Conference: Topical Discussion Summary, Best Practices Session #1 Exploring/scrutinizing our collections with new perspective**

This summary reports on discussions related to best practices for making collections more widely accessible to all through the application of new technology. A major component of these discussions took place at the two sessions of Best Practices #1, led by Kuniko Yamada McVey of the Harvard-Yenching Library. Additional discussions took place in the two wrap-up sessions.

Best Practices session #1 highlighted seven distinctive collections from the perspective of actual and potential users to broadly ask the following questions: What can be done with these collections — individually, collectively, virtually — to enable these assets to serve new dynamic uses, in which scholars and others can make use of these collections in productive new ways? Taking as its cue Clifford Lynch's assertion that "Special collections are a nexus where technology and content are meeting to advance scholarship in extraordinary new ways," discussions focus on new technologies and strategies for bringing important images in our collections to wider audiences, especially students and those who may not read Japanese fluently. The Clifford Lynch reading is found at.

<http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/fallforumproceedings/forum09proceedings.shtml>

The speakers at the Best Practices #1 session reported on an important group of international collections to discuss various strategies for making their images most widely available. Talks began with a video presentation from Toshinori Egami (@egamiday for twitter), Librarian, International Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken), discussing the rare Japanese materials in Nichibunken's collection.

Two scholars from Ritsumeikan University gave the second presentation. Ryo Akama, Director of Ritsumeikan's Art Research Center and Keiko Suzuki, Visiting Professor, discussed new developments in their image database of Japanese prints and illustrated books.

Laura Moretti, Lecturer, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italy, spoke about the origins of the Marega Collection (Università Pontificia Salesiana, Rome) and provided details of its contents and the ongoing project of cataloguing the collection.

The National Diet Library's Yuhei Kato, Chief of its Materials on the Allied Occupation of Japan Section introduced the resources of NDL's kensei shiryoshitsu (憲政資料室) with a focus on the archives of Kuratomi Yuzaburo (倉富勇三郎).

Daniel McKee, Japanese Bibliographer, Cornell University, uncovering some of the hidden resources of the Maeda Ai Library at Cornell University.

Eiichi Ito of the Library of Congress's Asian Division discussed how the Library of Congress makes information available to researchers and the general public, by citing examples as diverse as The Tale of Genji to the materials of the Japanese Imperial Army Navy.

And finally, Shirin Eshghi, Japanese Language Librarian, University of British Columbia, Canada provided an overview on how UBC's Asian Library is making its previously hidden collections accessible to language learners.

Discussions in the Best Practices #1 session zeroed in on several relevant questions:

In making previously hidden visual images available online are there new strategies for collective cataloging that are productively being employed? How can a new understanding of the best practices for such efforts be articulated and broadly disseminated? There is a growing consensus that it is better to upload images to the web first and develop the cataloging records thereafter, allowing people to contribute to the records. Traditionally, the NACSIS cataloging manual for ancient books, has been seen as the source for bibliographical records, however it is very slow and difficult to use. Also some cautioned that NACSIS's collective cataloging system is not yet functioning as well as hoped. It is especially hard to control quality and some feel that providing information with tools such as Google may be more successful. It was agreed that the field needs some common agreement on the criteria for quality control.

Professor Akama expressed the view that traditional notions of bibliographic information/records (書誌情報) must be re-evaluated, asking what kind of information is important for older materials? For example, access to the visual information, such as color of the paper, is very important. Images of separate works of the same title may be compared to one another. These factors support the strategy of uploading images first, and creating bibliographic information thereafter.

Initially the Marega Collection was hampered because as a small collection it did not have access to a server. The example of Library of Congress's project that uploaded a large body of images to Flickr from the Prints and Photographs Division has been widely cited. While users may tag images, it is not clear exactly what collective cataloging strategies may be driving the project. ([http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/flickr\\_pilot.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/flickr_pilot.html))

It is also very important to outline appropriate uses of media for outreach to undergraduates. Professor Steinhoff suggested that there is a need for more English annotations in the bibliographical records so that users who do not read Japanese fluently can find the materials more easily. She cited the example of University of Hawaii's Takazawa Collection website (<http://www.takazawa.hawaii.edu/default.aspx>), which has such annotations. It was also mentioned that some libraries now have a tagging feature, which can indicate the level of Japanese language proficiency required by each resource.

### **Summary of Recommendations for Scrutinizing our Collections with new Perspective**

There should be an online directory to hidden collections:

- Containing annotations and URL links
- Digitize first, catalog later
- Use new media of Web 2.0 and effective search engines
- Develop best practices guidelines
- Employ collective cataloging
- Create a directory for uncataloged hidden materials
- Need matching support/funding for (conservation, curating, cataloging)
- Share knowledge to avoid duplication of work
- Use Web 2.0 to develop study guides, blog, SNS promotion

Greater effort needs to be made to reach out to users (especially undergraduates):

- Include more English language annotation
- There should be coding to indicate the Japanese language level needed
- Use thesaurus (and un/controlled vocabulary) for Japanese language learners
- Collaborate with Japanese language teachers
- Use new media, such as video clips as outreach tools

Examples to look at:

- Digitizing materials → Streetprint Engine software
- World Digital Library (<http://www.wdl.org/en/>): Portuguese is also used in addition to six UN official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).
- Mapping Asia (<http://www.asiamap.ac.uk/>) was mentioned as an exemplary information resources directory in the UK that includes hidden collections.

Who takes the lead?

- Needs to be organized internationally and by the holders of hidden collections
- Possibly a CEAL-related group like the Rare Books Subcommittee
- Possibly led by a major library (Harvard-Yenching, for example)
- Might be led by a team of leading institutions such as Harvard-Yenching and Ritsumeikan or others
- Maybe created as an international consortia

Who should be the major collaborators?

- NDL
- LC
- Ritsumeikan
- Nichibunken
- Other major collections
- ATJ (on undergraduate materials)
- Open to all who wish to join

What roles might NCC play?

- NCC Website could house/host directory of hidden collections
- Provide promotion via web-lists
- Advocate with institutions worldwide
- Play supporting role like Tenri
- Connect people

Note takers were Mariko Honshoku of Harvard Law School Library and Mari Suzuki of the University of Michigan Library