

Collections Committee Meeting Minutes

Feb. 1, 2010 2pm EST

Present: Matt Blessing, John Buchtel, Alan Krieger, Diane Maher, Bob O'Neill (Chair), Pat Lawton (Guest)

The Committee was asked for its recommendations to the Board regarding member responsibilities to regularly add content to the portal. Alan provided an overview of the issue, noting that both updating existing content and adding new content should be considered. Updating existing portal content would entail updating, reviewing and enhancing records in the portal. Adding new content would entail implementing processes locally and in conjunction with the CRRA to ensure that as members acquire new materials appropriate for inclusion, content is identified as such and made available in the portal.

The Committee's recommendations for updating existing portal content and adding new content are as follows (not in priority order).

1. Encourage all member institutions to review their portal content at least on an annual basis (biannually or quarterly would be better but committee members did not want to discourage potential CRRA members). To assist in the review, CRRA would send each member institution a link to their portal records.
2. Focus on really rare materials in considering new candidates for inclusion. Focus on records likely to change. For example, archival and manuscript collections and finding aids are more likely to be enhanced or changed than are records for books.
3. Inform Eric of modified records. Build this communication into the workflow. For example, when you finish revising a finding aid, put it on a checklist to notify CRRA.
4. Recommend that the Board "recommend" rather than require action.

Suggested Mechanisms for Adding New Content

Committee members discussed two primary mechanisms for adding new content. Members note that the procedure would vary from institution to institution but the goal would be the same – to identify content held locally that is appropriate for inclusion in the portal.

1. Member institutions add "CRRA" to their records that are appropriate to the portal. Records would either be sent to Eric or to a web space from which Eric would regularly ingest records.
2. Locally, characteristics in records could be identified and automatically extracted on a regular basis. For example, members noted that an institution might work with systems administrators so that as BR-BX come into rare books, those records would be automatically extracted and sent to Eric.

Mechanisms for enhancing or updating existing content will be addressed locally since relevant records, such as certain dynamically updated archival holdings, may constitute a distinct subset of an institution's CRRA contributions.

Bob asked about the viability of Eric harvesting member content. Pat checked in with Eric and his proposed workflow is as follows. It is a type of harvesting in that the records are regularly gathered or “harvested” from member institutions and ingested into the portal.

The steps in Eric’s proposed procedure are as follows.

1. Member institution tags records destined for the portal. One way to do this is to add “CRRA” to a local notes field. Ideally, this will be part of the institution’s workflow and will capture any added content on a daily basis.
2. Member institution extracts records destined for the portal and places them on a web server.
3. Eric goes to the institution’s web server and ingests member records into the portal.

Other comments of note

Matt suggested the Committee identify a target collecting area for members on an annual basis. For example, what shall we as CRRA members emphasize in 2012? Vatican II? Liturgy and devotion? Catholic social action? Members would then focus on describing materials appropriate to the theme and add them to the portal. CRRA could publicize the collecting efforts, and such collaborative collection building could be a useful tool in identifying potential member institutions. Committee members heartily endorsed Matt’s suggestion.

Submitted by Pat Lawton
February 3, 2010

