

Cultural Institutions in a Networked Environment

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Archives, Libraries and Museums

- “memory institutions”
 - in use as early as 1975: G.E Burcaw, . *Introduction to museum work* (Nashville).
 - also called “cultural repositories”
- Grouped together as providers of source materials in the digital library
- Places with ‘cultural stuff’

Characteristics

	Collection	Collection Development	Interpretive Approach	Nature of Experience
Archives Records of actions	Record series - unique and evidential	Most disposed; few retained records selected and managed	Organizational context	Individual / Browsing -> visit reading room
Museums Objects of record	Artefacts / Specimens - original and representative	Individually chosen, rarely deaccessioned	Curatorial narrative	Social / Visit -> go to exhibit
Libraries Information objects	Publications - copies	Dynamic collections, regularly culled	Abstract subject classification	Personal / Searching -> check out book

AML: Similarities

- Collections of source materials often related to similar subjects
- Used research, education and enjoyment
- Held in the public trust
- Interpreted in support of education

AML: Digital Similarities

- Institutional collections presented in one networked space
- Shared technological challenges in digitization (preservation, born digital, knowledge representation, metadata management)
- Shared data formats (text, image, sound, multimedia, GIS ...)
- Similar user expectations for seamless access in the 'networked society'

Challenges

- Traditional Business Methods don't support Users' Research Processes
 - Met needs of particular institution types
 - Library-item shared cataloging
 - Archival Finding Aids
 - Museum systems specific to individual collections
 - Documentation and record-keeping structures evolved from internal needs
 - Repositioned in the networked environment (not always successfully)
 - Web-based catalogues
 - Dublin Core descriptions

Users never did understand the methods

- "Margaret Lawrence Fonds"
 - “She must have got married...”
 - Wendy Duff (University of Toronto) User Study
- “looking for Mr. Rococco”
 - CIMI user study reported by Jane Sledge
- World War I
 - isn't a heading in the Library Subject Catalog
 - see the “Great War”

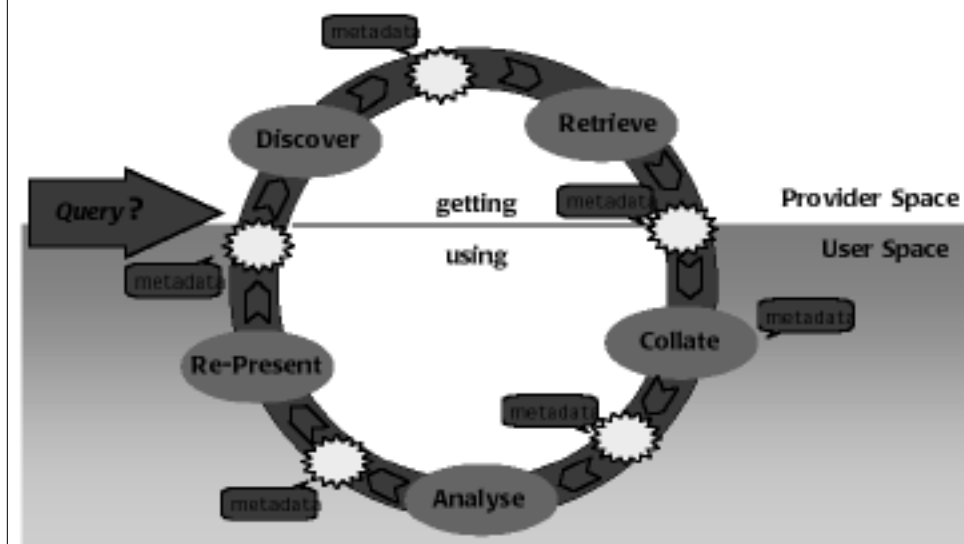
Metadata

- Reflects professional, disciplinary and subject perspectives
- Rarely maps to users' vocabularies or points of view
- Focuses on Discovery rather than Uses
- Emphasizes description of object-in-hand rather than interpretive context

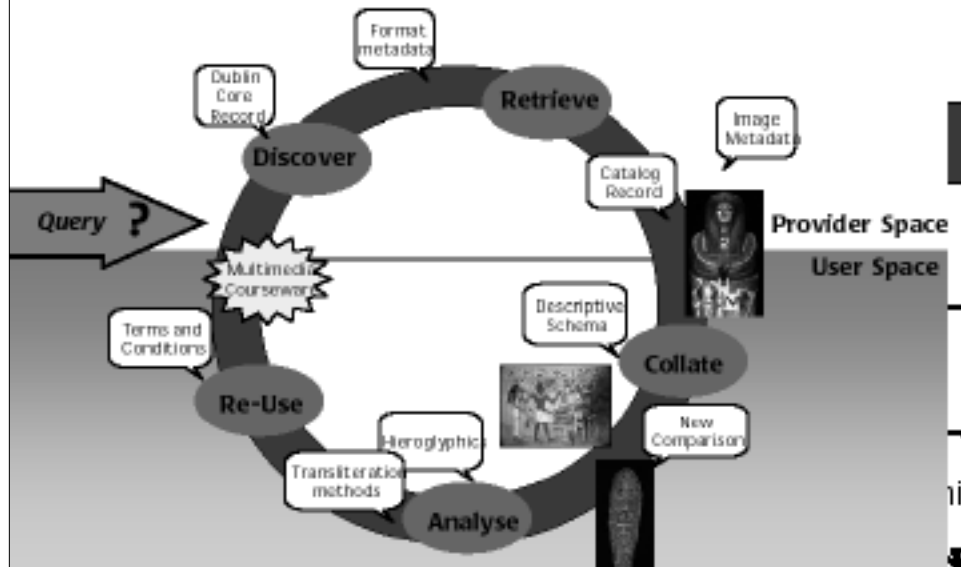
Users' Views are...

- Independent of Individual Users
 - same person may have different points of view, levels of expertise and requirements
- Dictated by Uses
 - teaching a class tomorrow
 - identifying source material for further scholarly study
 - analysing results of research findings
 - researching my ancestors
- Informed by their place in the research process

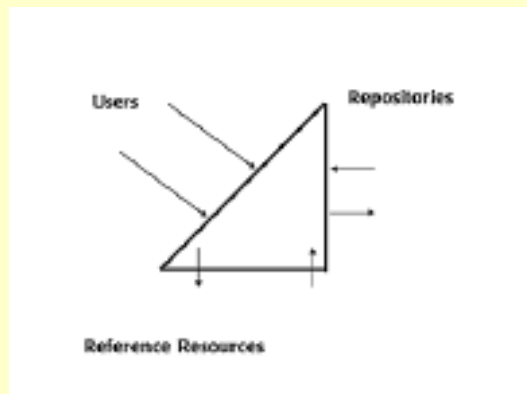
The Research Process



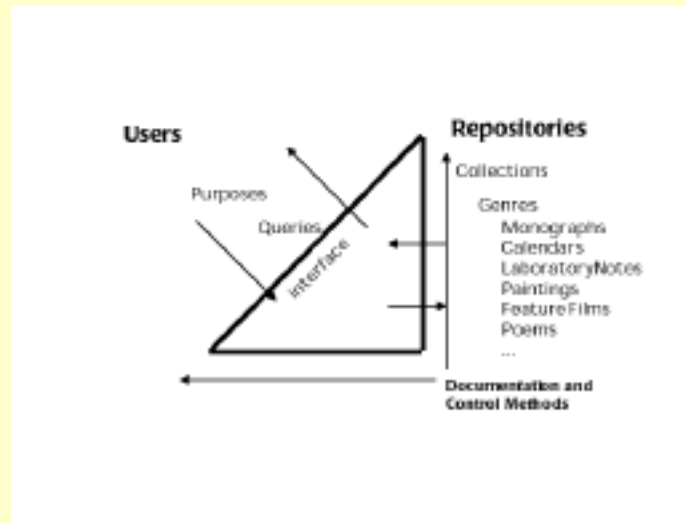
Examples of Metadata



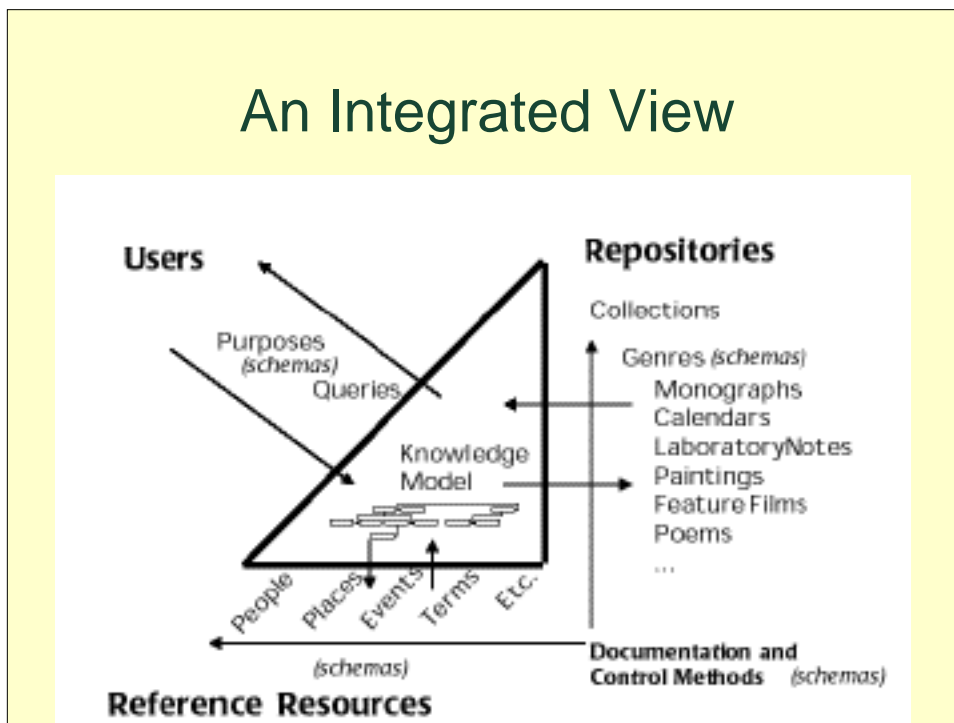
Simple View of Relationships



Users and Repositories



An Integrated View



Promising Approaches

- Knowledge Representation and Navigation
 - XML, RDF and the Semantic Web (W3C initiative)
- Reference Models
 - BAC, OAIS
 - CIDOC Relational and O-O Models (CRM)
 - MPEG-7 metadata, ABC
- Metadata Harvesting
 - Dublin Core, OAI (Open Archives Initiative), RSS (RDF syndication services)

Changing Professional Roles

- Interdisciplinary Collaboration & Team Work
- Changing Organizational Structures
 - Collaborations across departments and institutions
- Integration of external knowledge sources
 - Linking to other resources
- Scalability and adaptability critical

Management Methods

- Clear definition of requirements
- Articulated business plans
- Concrete measures of success
- Risk analysis at all stages

- Willingness to adjust to feedback and changing circumstances
- Ongoing evaluation and communication

Repositioning

- Embrace new technologies
- Create new alliances
- Adopt new business models

- Exploit strengths of different institutional types
 - let libraries provide access, museums do interpretation, archives provide evidence

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