“Skating away on the thin ice of a new day”

Implementing the EAD at
The New York Public Library

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Strategic Goals for the Digital Library at NYPL

• Create an online research environment

• Scalable technology infrastructure

• Digitization of unique collections

• Expanding public access to primary source material through our catalogs, finding aids, and other research tools
Principles

• Use public standards or best practice
• System-wide procedures and practices
• Web delivery, searchability
• Integrate and supplement our OPAC with digital resources
• Integrate access to our digital and paper collections
The Archives at NYPL

• Mss & Archives Div. 29,000 lin ft, 3,000 collections
• Schomburg Center 8,000 lin ft, 650 collections
• Berg Collection 50,000 mss
• Music Division over 1 million ms items
• Rodger & Hammerstein Archive of Recorded Sound 500,000 recordings
• Dance Collection over 1 million ms items
• Theatre Collection
Why EAD?

- Uniform
- Stable
- Non-proprietary
- Distributable
- Searchable
- Hypertextual
Archival Documents

Hypertextual by nature
Not independent
Created in and for a context
Linked to other documents
  By content
  By association
  By historical circumstance
Documentary Entropy

Entropy: the natural and irreversible tendency toward randomness and disorder in any system

Second Law of Thermodynamics: Entropy, randomness, always increases

Bob’s Law of Documentary Entropy:
Documents tend to disorder
  • Correspondence to in one collection
  • Correspondence from in others
  • Circumstance and time have dispersed documents
  • If collected they are in many different places
Relinking the Documents

Dance Heritage Coalition

- 7 institutions
- 51 Collections
- 1 Server
- Searchable
  - by institution
  - by collection
  - across all collections, all institutions
Distributed Collections

Distributed by format

- Rosa Ponselle Papers in Music Div.
- Rosa Ponselle recordings and motion pictures in Rodgers & Hammerstein Archive of Recorded Sound

Distributed by type

- Edward Albee Papers in Mss & Arch. Div.
- Edward Albee Playscripts in Theatre Coll.
Reuniting the Collections

New York Public Library Digital Library Collections

New York Public Library Finding Aids

- Albee (Edward) Papers, ca. 1945-1964
- Albee (Edward) Scripts
- Antoon (A. J.) Papers
- Astruc (Gabriel) Papers
- Atkinson (Brooks) Papers
- Bakeless (John Edwin) Papers, 1913-1977
- Belasco (David) Papers
- Bliss (Anthony A.) Papers
- Bowman (Betty) Ephemera
Current Status

• 57 EAD FA’s on Web
• 39 HTML FA’s on Web
• About 180 EAD FA’s coded and being edited
• Bulk of SGML markup has been outsourced
• SGML served by Dynaweb
Future Needs

• What we need to get
• What we need to implement
• What we need to learn
• What we need to decide
What we need to get

Better and fewer tools

– Collapse process
  • Convert existing FA’s
  • Create new FA’s
  • Maintain, update, modify
  • Create paper output

– User interface
What we need to implement

• Systematic training
• Integration of EAD into processing
• Name authority control
• Management of online resources
• Better and more consistent display
What we need to learn

• How FA’s are used by researchers
• How to design FA’s for use
• How to integrate FA’s into other parts of Digital Library
What we need to decide

• XML--When and How?
• Use EAD data structure for other purposes?
• How much more conversion of existing FA’s?
• Links to external resources