

Combining Forces: Using multiple out of the box programs when programmers are out of the question!

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Abstract: We will outline the interaction between two third-party software applications for streamlined collection management and user access to Special Collections materials. Combining the accession, donor and patron management, description, and online user interface capabilities of PastPerfect with the more sophisticated digital asset management system of CONTENTdm, we have centralized access to our diverse collections. Special Collections, Reference, Collection Management, and Administration Departments have collaborated to make PastPerfect our single access point for over twenty separately maintained Library created databases that are not included in the University System consortium's catalog. Standardized metadata creation for accession and descriptive records in both PastPerfect and CONTENTdm facilitates interoperability between the two systems. If digital objects are available, we can extract the metadata from PastPerfect using a Dublin Core crosswalk; conversely, our digitization workflow allows for item level metadata from CONTENTdm to be imported into PastPerfect. This ensures that PastPerfect is a one-stop shop for discovery of Special Collections' analog and digital materials. Researchers now search one interface and retrieve results from our varied collections – including finding aids, photographs, fanzines, and university publications - with a link to the digital object in CONTENTdm if one exists. Due to our lack of programming staff it was essential to select out of the box software that offered customization and a high level of support, as opposed to building a program in-house or utilizing open source software. We feel that this is a unique and valuable workflow that has not been implemented by other institutions in similar circumstances.

About the authors:

Susan Graham is the Special Collections Librarian at the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), where she works with the photography, popular culture, rare books, and digital collections. She holds B.A.s in Visual Arts (concentration in Photography) and Anthropology from UMBC and obtained her MLS in 2007 from the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. During her graduate studies, she worked as a graduate assistant in the conservation lab and in the Preservation Department of the University of Maryland Libraries.

Lindsey Loeper currently serves as the Special Collections Archivist at the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). In this capacity she manages the University Archives, the Center for Biological Sciences Archives, and manuscript collections relating to the history of photography, science fiction, and Marylandia. Ms. Loeper received a B.A. in American Studies from UMBC in 2004 and an M.L.S. from the University of Maryland, College Park's College of Information Studies with a specialization in Archives, Records, and Information Management in 2007. While at College Park she was a graduate assistant in the Special Collections department of the National Agricultural Library. Ms. Loeper is also an active member of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) and the Maryland History and Cultural Collaborative (MHCC).