



**Art Libraries Society of North America, 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, Alberta, Canada, May 5-9, 2006**

**ARTbibliographies Modern (ABM) and Design and Applied Arts Index (DAAI)  
Users Group Meeting  
Saturday, May 6, 3:10-4:30 pm**

**Speaker**

Rachel Brockhurst, Editor, ARTbibliographies Modern

This first joint ABM and DAAI Users Group generated a keen response, with 15 attendees from a variety of institutions, who had a range of experience with these two products. The group was also attended by C. Alan Golden, Director of Arts and Humanities at CSA, whose help in addressing issues pertaining to related CSA business was appreciated.

Each attendee was issued with a copy of the ABM/DAAI Art Librarians Questionnaire, which had also been available on the CSA Exhibition Stand, which was used to prompt discussion in the group. Conference attendees have urged us to make the survey available electronically. We are currently in process of doing so, and will post a memo on ARLIS-L when it is accessible.

An introductory presentation from Rachel detailed activities and achievements in ABM and DAAI over the past twelve months, including the currency of records, the range of new journals and subjects covered, and the availability of up-to-date Current Serials Lists and the DAAI Database Guide at <http://www.csa.com/>. Targets for the coming year were outlined, which include an increase in frequency of uploads, further enhancements to the Serials Lists, and improvements to be made to full-text linking.

Issues were raised about missing records in ABM and DAAI, and users' awareness of holes in our coverage. To remedy some of these concerns, we are considering a long term project to identify dates of coverage for our serial information. Further information on this will be made available in due course.

For the major part of the session, attendees were invited to discuss and highlight issues on the following topics:

**1. Introducing different formats into ABM and DAAI - Artist's Books and Graphic Novels, Conference Proceedings, DVDs, Video Documentaries**

a. Artist's Books and Graphic Novels

Current Library of Congress Classification is felt to be largely unhelpful and limited. The information which would be useful for ABM/DAAI to provide includes items such as the binding, lettering and print processes used in individual editions. There has been a marked increase in interest in these two areas, both from scholars and librarians, with a number of the latter beginning to build collections. Concerns were

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raised over their status/document type – neither ABM nor DAAI cover art objects, but rather secondary sources about art and design.

b. Conference Proceedings

Rachel indicated that, with the relocation of Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) to European office of CSA in Oxford, U.K., where ABM and DAAI are based, we now have the technology to begin covering Conference Proceedings in ABM and DAAI. This was met with considerable enthusiasm. Two conferences mentioned during the discussion were REFRESH! Conference on the Histories of Media Art (<http://www.mediaarthistory.org/main.html>) and DiGRA World Conference of the Digital Games Research Association (<http://www.digra.org/>) Rachel invited further suggestions of Conferences to be emailed to her or Deb Sanders (see below for contact details).

c. DVDs and Video Documentaries

In general, the response to this was positive, with some queries over the method and scope of coverage. Rachel explored the possibilities of covering documentaries about artists and video interviews in a similar fashion to articles. Alan Golden explored some multimedia issues in regard to links that may be incorporated on CSA Illumina, resources and copyright permitting.

**2. Book and Exhibition Catalog coverage in ABM**

Rachel reiterated that the backlog of Books and Catalogs had now largely been made available on CSA Illumina, and highlighted concerns within the Oxford team over the relevancy of Book and Catalog records in ABM in light of developments on other bibliographic internet services, such as amazon.com.

Rachel asked the group how this function was used within their libraries. Librarians stressed that this service was very important to their collection development, and is generally used to enhance the information held on their local library catalog – it was not felt to be an either/or option, and often turns up titles that would not have been apparently relevant from the library catalog listing alone.

The acquisition strategy for Books and Catalogs in ABM is being reappraised by the editorial and acquisition team, and advice on content was asked for. Here, the group suggested:

- Looking to the lists offered by book distributors such as Worldwide Books which sell wholly to the library community.
- Researching extant library collections of exhibition catalogs and pamphlets. Two particular collections mentioned were those at the University of California, Santa Barbara and the Art Institute of Chicago.
- ABM should cover all Biennale Catalogs if possible, as they provide significant detail on participating artists, and are key to the study of contemporary art.

In response to questions over the decision to provide abstracts for Book and Catalog records, and to what depth, the group offered the following:

- Abstracts are useful in the sense that they are a 'word-soup' for students, and can often suggest useful material/avenues for enquiry which may not have been found if just an indexed bibliographic listing had been available.
- Following from that, the more abstracts per book (i.e. an abstract for each relevant chapter) would offer more instances for finding material...

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- ...however, there was a general feeling that if covering essays and chapters within books would diminish resources and reduce the breadth of material available from ABM, then a single detailed record would be adequate.

**3. Book and Exhibition Reviews in ABM and DAAI**

At present, ABM cover only Exhibition Reviews (ER) whereas DAAI has now ceased covering Book Reviews (BR) from its content (as of April 2006) – Rachel asked the group what their views on these types of records were. Should ABM provide BRs? Should these types of records have as full an abstract as an article record? And should the critical stance of the author feature in the abstract?

- ERs are found to be useful when researching the activities of artists and galleries, and when information on a gallery is hard to find elsewhere.
- Fuller abstracts may be useful/more representative for some serials, although if this took resources away from covering more articles, the latter are more important for scholars.
- Higher level scholars use book reviews to track the subjects covered by publications in their area of study/research, and also to survey the activities of other scholars in their field.
- The critical stance was deemed important by some of the group, whereas others didn't feel strongly either way.

It was requested that Rachel submit the list of journals considered for ER coverage to ARLIS-L in order that librarians give their opinions on those covered, and offer suggestions for key serials that may be missing from coverage. This will be done in the coming weeks.

**4. Retrospective projects**

In conjunction with the librarian at Sotheby's Institute of Art, London, ABM is looking into a project to create retrospective content. The group suggested that this type of content would be valuable for those journals which are not currently available in print or digital formats, but far less so for journals which have already digitized their back issues. The group warned against creating a redundancy and recommended that further research should be completed before starting such a project.

Rachel also noted the retrospective project DAR (Design Abstracts Retrospective), which is scheduled for distribution by CSA in early 2007.

**5. Languages in ABM and DAAI**

Reflecting on the broad range of languages and places of publication to be found in ABM's current coverage, Rachel enquired as to which languages were regularly used in the group's libraries, and what geographic range their serials collections had. French and Spanish appeared to be the most predominant holdings for other language serials, with those institutions from Quebec stressing that a number of students spoke only French fluently.

It was felt that, even when the journals were not in English, having a range of countries of origin helped students to identify where work is being shown, and can track trends of art practice/scholarship in different geographical areas.

## **6. Enhancements to search strategies**

In an effort to identify areas where the search options offered in CSA Illumina could be improved, Rachel asked briefly what features were lacking, hard to find, or hard to use in the current platform. Her suggestion of a pull-down menu for Publication Type (e.g. Book, Catalog etc.) was felt to be a positive inclusion. A query over whether there was a setting option to always see records in full format was raised. Rachel will address the query to a CSA trainer in the coming weeks.

## **7. Currency awareness services, such as ARTbibliographies Current Titles (ACT) and Recent References**

Following discussions amongst the Oxford team over the relevancy of ACT, Rachel quickly surveyed the group as to whether they subscribed to this service. No members of the group recalled a recent subscription to the service.

Rachel then introduced the Recent References service, which is not currently available for ABM and DAAI, explained that it would consist of unedited records loaded every two weeks and would provide the most recent records ABM and DAAI had to hand. She highlighted the problem that, as DAAI currently uploads records every two weeks, a two week service for DAAI would make no difference to currency. The group voiced no strong opinion on this development, although some felt it may be of value for ABM. Rachel concluded by intimating that this may be a development to watch for in the future, by which time a suitable version of this service could be developed for the Arts and Humanities databases.

## **8. Other areas the group discussed**

Why does ABM not go back further for the coverage of American Art?

The discussion centered on the date at which American Art can be considered 'Modern'. The group's suggestions ranged from 1780 to 1850, depending on the focus of their scholars and institutions. It was felt that the early period of American Art has not been covered well by electronic resources such as ABM, and queries were raised over the changes in the scope of ABM.

Rachel reviewed the current scope of ABM, and referred to the alteration to the scope of ABM from Issue 19, 1988. In the Introduction, the then Editor stated: *'in order to continue to offer a comprehensive service in modern art which meets the needs of our users, it would be necessary both to expand and to revise the existing ABM... ABM's principal area of strength is seen to be its documentation of 20th Century material, and that other services are now providing a thorough coverage of the 19th century'*. However, our subscriber base has changed over time, as have the topics of study, Rachel acknowledged that it may be advantageous for ABM to revise its scope in consultation with its users and advisers. She concluded by noting that as ABM has made an exception for photography, so perhaps an adjustment for American art, Canadian art, and that from similar countries could also be made.

For further information about this discussion and/or other details about ABM and DAAI, please contact the Editorial team direct via email:  
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We'd like to thank all participants for their contributions and the conference organizers for their assistance in facilitating this Users Group.