

It must be emphasized that all collections and significant subcollections will be represented on LCS and OCLC in cataloging records in the appropriate MARC format. The special collections automated finding aid is not intended to function as a library catalog, but more as an index. For example, the traditional American library cataloging concept of "main entry" will not be used. "Main entry" and "added entry" names will all be treated identically in the PERN field. (Names used as subjects will be put into separate fields.) The physical description fields will allow for expanded description of and access to both graphic items (such as an ambrotype) and support formats (such as a leather case). In this instance, both case and ambrotype would be described fully. Also, multiple sizes of posters for a film could be included in the same record, but posters of each size would be individually retrievable. Vocabulary control will be maintained in many of the physical description fields.

As part of the planning process, the committee attempted to learn of current projects which would be instructive as models. A literature search was done. Database documentation proved informative from two photography collections: the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, and the Photography Collection, The Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. A

review of museum-based data systems was also informative, and the Smithsonian Institution was contacted for information regarding its in-house system. Various visual resources librarians and other special collection librarians were consulted.

Discussion of the STAR system was initiated with the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities which has used STAR for several years. In addition, an early prototype of the database was set up on Ingres at Ohio State.

Now that the plan for SCDB exists, the next step is to talk to vendors to determine whether or not any currently available software can implement it, before requests for funding can go forward. SCDB is still in the project definition stage and its final format is heavily dependent upon the software system chosen. Topping the list of products under consideration are BASIS, STAR, ARTIS and Ingres. We seek the reaction of our colleagues to the brief description of SCDB in this article and would be most grateful to receive any comments or suggestions for its improvement. Please send responses to Lucy Caswell, The Ohio State University, 242 West 18th Ave., Columbus OH 43210-1107 (614) 292-0538. We would be especially interested to know about other libraries which have created automated finding aids.

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Letter

BI for educators

To the Editor:

The piece by the Bibliographic Instruction for Educators Committee of the EBSS section of ACRL (*C&RL News*, April 1988, pp. 217-23) is seriously flawed, especially in the "Reference tools" section. Despite the disclaimer that "Inclusion in this list by no means indicates endorsement of the quality of information provided by the source" (to which one might well respond, "Why not?"), the first two books listed have drawn highly critical reviews since 1968. These are the Gourman Reports on graduate and undergraduate programs (3rd and 5th editions, respectively).

Librarians in charge of selecting reference books might be excused for having missed the reviews in *Personnel and Guidance Journal* (May 1968); *Journal of the Association of College Admissions Counselors* (June 1968), reprinted in the *Middle States Association Report* (October 1968); the letter in the *Journal of Education for Librarianship* (Summer 1970); the full-page story in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 8, 1978, as well as a letter, July 3, 1978, and another long story, February 15, 1984); and the 17-page definitive article in *Change*

magazine (November/December 1984). But it is less easy to excuse overlooking the 9-page article in *RQ* (Spring 1986).

If more need be said, a look at the new edition of Sheehy will disclose that the editors of that ALA publication declined to include the Gourman Reports because of serious questions about the validity of the compilations. To hand out the Gourman Reports in a public library to unsuspecting high school seniors is bad enough; to think of giving them to academic administrators, as the Committee recommends, is mind-numbing.

Perhaps one reason the Committee missed the recent critiques of Gourman's books is explained by the fact that the "Bibliography" section of its report contains no title dated later than 1984.

The continuing uncritical use of the Gourman Reports calls into question standard library acquisition procedures. When a title is ordered without the backing of a faculty member or librarian, or a reputable review, does it then just land on the shelves without further examination? Do any libraries judge such books by more than their covers? Once a title is established on a library's shelves, are new editions ordered like a drug addict hungering for a new fix?—*William R. Eshelman, The Press at the Camperdown Elm, Wooster, Ohio.* ■ ■

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