

Steven Carrico, Jason Fleming, and Betsy Simpson

# Virtual bookplates

## Enhancing donor recognition and library development

Many academic libraries are dealing with severe budget restrictions and are increasingly relying upon library development to support their collections and services. The University of Florida Smathers Libraries are fortunate to have an active and growing development program that effectively cultivates gifts and the establishment of endowment funds. New cataloging and technological innovations created at the Smathers Libraries have incrementally transformed the static print bookplate into a virtual method of donor recognition.

First, cataloging staff developed new methods of acknowledging gifts and endowments by inputting acknowledgement notes into the bibliographic records that display in the library's OPAC (online public access catalog). The online display of notes was an important initial advancement, as it brought far more attention to donors through the public catalog. With the concept of online display laid as a cornerstone, staff from cataloging and acquisitions took the next step by literally

creating links to online bookplate images that emerge in separate browser windows displaying individualized messages acknowledging gifts and endowments.

### Background

There are serious drawbacks to using print bookplates in libraries, especially for large academic institutions. Print bookplates require piece-in-hand access for donors to view the

bookplates honoring their gifts. At the Smathers Libraries, books are housed in various branch locations across campuses, so it is very difficult for donors to find the books acquired through their donations.

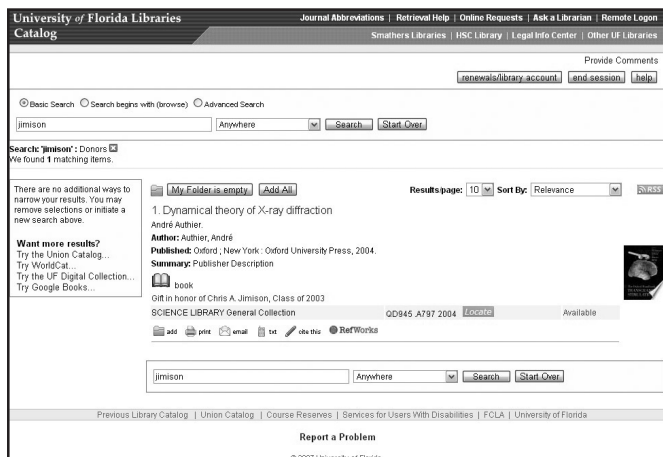


Figure 1. Catalog record with bookplate link. Visit this article online for detailed images.

The libraries also had to purchase or generate

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print bookplates, which became increasingly expensive to produce, and the process of affixing the plates created a specialized monograph workflow that was labor-intensive.

To offset the problems associated with print bookplates, a team of technical services librarians launched a project in 2008 to create and display virtual bookplates for gifts and endowments from imbedded links in the library's OPAC (see Figure 1). Three goals of the project were identified: boost the speed and efficiency of "attaching" bookplates, improve the access and visibility of the bookplates, and offer the Smathers Libraries' Development Office an attractive online forum for future development.

### Peer practices

The value of donor relations has been noted in an article by Miguel Juarez, who outlined the growing importance of fundraising in academic libraries. Citing the personal and corporate characteristics inherent in successful fundraising efforts, Juarez commented that donor recognition is a critical component.<sup>1</sup> Print bookplates have long been a standard practice in academic and college libraries to acknowledge gifts and according to Gail Gunter, bookplates originally served the purpose of showing private ownership or provenance. Libraries adopted bookplates to register publicly in-kind gifts and endowment purchases, often creating versions that represent unique attributes of donors and their collections.<sup>2</sup>

Personalizing the connection between donors and libraries is a crucial step to development, but bookplates can be also used to honor individuals. At the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, a key part of a special event to honor newly promoted and tenured faculty includes bookplating works by the honorees.<sup>3</sup> In addition to offering creative bookplate renditions to honor individuals, libraries are developing techniques to expand the recognition of the traditional print bookplate. For example, the handling of gifts in-kind at the University of Saskatchewan includes both physically at-

taching a bookplate to each piece and adding a local series note in the bibliographic record that displays in the OPAC.<sup>4</sup>

Library Web sites offer a variety of procedures dealing with bookplates, particularly online practices. Procedures used by catalogers to add donor text to bibliographic records are available at the University of Colorado<sup>5</sup> and the University of Maine.<sup>6</sup> The University of Pennsylvania has expanded on this concept by creating a link in the online catalog for every title purchased with an endowment that routes to a Web page with details on the donor and fund used to purchase the item.<sup>7</sup>

At the University of Michigan-Dearborn, donor names in the catalog are linked to a bookplate page, and a 710 field is used to bring together all donations for a particular year, i.e., "Library donation, 2009."<sup>8</sup>

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Medical Library recognizes e-book donors on the Web,<sup>9</sup> while Brown University's use of virtual bookplates involves linking from the catalog record to a bookplate display generated from a database containing detailed information about the donor as well as the endowment, cash gift, or in-kind gift.<sup>10</sup>

In a presentation at the 2008 Innovative Users Group Conference, Brown University librarians cited a 63 percent increase in new gifts to the library endowment in the year following the introduction of their digital bookplate program. The librarians noted many positive comments from development staff and the donors.<sup>11</sup> These findings are indications that more robust donor recognition efforts can have a significant impact on library fundraising.

### Bookplate survey

To better determine how academic libraries are using bookplates to acknowledge gifts and endowments, a short, eight-question survey was created in Survey Monkey and was sent out August 2009 to three electronic lists: ACQNET, AUTOCAT, and LIBDEV.<sup>12</sup> The survey was designed to solicit input from respondents on bookplate policies and procedures being used in libraries, whether

Leader	LDL	---	~~~~~nx~a22~~~~~1n~4500
Fixed Data	008	---	0704042p~a28~4001uengu0000000
Not in Table	TRK	---	CAT STATS 20070404
Link	LKR	---	HDL
		---	UFU01
		---	003737914
Location	852	0	FU
		---	UFSCI
		---	GEN
		---	QD945
		---	.A797 2004
Elec.Loc.Acc.	856	42	Gift in honor of Chris A. Jimison, Class of 2003
		---	<a href="http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/tools/bookplate/donor.htm?donor=Gift%20in%20honor%20of%20Chris%20A.%20Jimison%20Class%20of%202003">http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/tools/bookplate/donor.htm?donor=Gift in honor of: Chris A. Jimison: Class of 2003</a>

Figure 2. Holdings record.

those bookplates were print or virtual. We received 164 responses from our survey, which in itself shows the degree of interest in this subject. From the respondent libraries, almost all (95%) currently use print bookplates, while few (16%) make use of the virtual format.

Follow-up questions focused on the technical aspects for the libraries using virtual bookplates. From the responses we learned that most libraries using the virtual plates were adding text to the catalog records to honor the donors (83%), indexing the text and making it searchable (70%), and adding a link to a bookplate image from the online catalog record (38%).

The most telling response of all was the number of respondents (88%) expressing interest in pursuing a virtual bookplate program for their libraries. Among the comments were many enthusiastic replies such as, "Sounds like a great idea"; "I think this idea merits pursuit"; and "I would be very interested in how you do this."

Clearly many libraries are either seriously contemplating the use of virtual bookplates, or are already taking steps to implement virtual plates into their operations.

### Technical workflow

Steps for creating the virtual bookplates can be traced back to the method used to display holdings notes in the online catalog to recognize gifts and endowments. Over the past

two years, the processes for creating virtual bookplates were revised until standardized procedures were developed

and posted on the cataloging Web site.<sup>13</sup> Catalogers now employ a macro to add a donor name to the bibliographic record in a MARC 796 field with a locally defined second indicator-3.

The second indicator serves as a unique identifier, which FCLA targets to construct a donor facet. The facet is not displayed to

the public, rather it allows items with the designated MARC coding to be found via a search box directed at the donated or endowed material, an advantage when donors want a quick and easy way to keyword search donations. The macro also assists the cataloger in adding a link to the holdings record in a MARC 856 field (see Figure 2). The 856 field includes a gift note (e.g., Gift in memory of) and connects to a dynamically generated online bookplate by way of an HTML file, which calls a

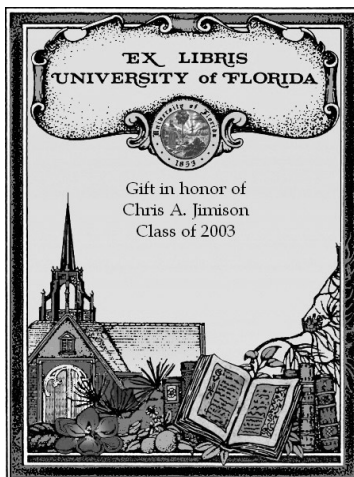


Figure 3. Virtual Bookplate display from the OPAC.

JavaScript file. The HTML file is empty except for the reference to the JavaScript file. The JavaScript constructs the actual page, bringing in the image and inserting text from the URL in the 856 field. This method allows the library to use the same two files (HTML, JavaScript) to render images for bookplates that display as full-color JPG images complete with donor information (see Figure 3).

Custom services have been created within the ILS staff GUI that supplement a workflow enabling staff to identify records that have been purchased with endowment funds. The first service generates a file of system numbers by fund code to use as input for an

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Figure 4. Search Box.

Aleph global change service that inserts a 797 field with the name of the endowment into the bibliographic record. The second service compiles the associated holding system numbers so that a static link to the endowment's bookplate can be added to the holdings record using another global change. This workflow is run on a quarterly basis to identify new purchases made on active endowment funds.

## Conclusion

By summer 2009, the virtual bookplates project was considered a success at the Smathers Libraries. The use of virtual bookplates has received support from library administration, library selectors, and the development staff. Donors can now easily see the books acquired through their generosity by inputting the name of a donor or endowment into a basic search box found on the Development Office's front Web page (see Figure 4). Such a search retrieves a list of donated titles that contain links to the virtual bookplate, often designed specifically for that endowment (see Figure 5). This type of donor recognition enhances the cultivating process as it communicates to donors that their endowments are valued and visible to library users. Virtual bookplates also

present better recognition for material gifts. Libraries can use virtual bookplates to specifically spell out a donor's name or the person a gift may be honoring, and a quick search now finds the exact materials added to library collections.

The opportunity to use virtual bookplates is related in a story told by the Chief Development Officer at the Smathers Libraries Samuel

Huang. Huang was in the home of a potential donor urging him to donate to a funding program (Books of Honor) using virtual bookplates. Opening his laptop and searching by name, Huang retrieved a set of books purchased through a recent donation. The donor was so impressed by the virtual bookplates displayed and the ease of finding them, he immediately offered a \$2,000 cash donation.<sup>14</sup>

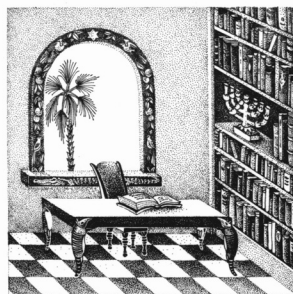
The prospects that online bookplates impart for library development are obvious and invigorating, and the results of the survey revealed that many librarians and development officers are very attracted to the development opportunities afforded through virtual bookplates. We recommend that interested libraries take advantage

of the online technology now available to create a virtual bookplate program tailored for its own specific workflow and development goals.

## Notes

1. Miguel Juarez, "Donor Relations for Librarians," *Art Documentation*, 24, no. 1 (2005): 38–41.
2. Gail Gunter, "Enchanting Ex-libris: A Brief History of Bookplates," *Mississippi Libraries*, 67, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 71–73.

## The Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica



at the University of Florida Libraries

Figure 5. Endowment Bookplate.

3. Lisa German and Karen Schmidt, "Honoring Faculty: Book Plates to Celebrate Faculty Achievements," *College & Research Libraries News*, 62, no. 11 (Dec. 2001): 1066–1067, 1130.

4. Donna Canevari de Paredes, "Gifts-in-kind in the Academic Library: The University of Saskatchewan Experience," *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services*, 30, no. 1/2 (March/June 2006): 55–68.

5. University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries, "Virtual Bookplate Policies and Procedure." Available online at [ucblibraries.colorado.edu/collectiondevelopment/bmanual2/VIRTUAL%20BOOKPLATES-%20final%20draft%204-1-08.doc](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/collectiondevelopment/bmanual2/VIRTUAL%20BOOKPLATES-%20final%20draft%204-1-08.doc). [Accessed 8/11/10].

6. University of Maine Fogler Library, "Virtual Bookplates and Inscriptions." Available online at [www.library.umaine.edu/techserv/Cataloging/Virtual\\_Bookplates.htm](http://www.library.umaine.edu/techserv/Cataloging/Virtual_Bookplates.htm). [Accessed 8/11/10].

7. University of Pennsylvania Franklin Libraries, to see an example, catalog available online [www.franklin.library.upenn.edu](http://www.franklin.library.upenn.edu) (search "glossberg fund"). [Accessed 8/11/10].

8. University of Michigan-Dearborn Mardigan Library, to see an example, catalog available online at [wizard.umd.umich.edu](http://wizard.umd.umich.edu)

(search "library donation 2009"). [Accessed 2/19/10].

9. "Electronic Books, Listed by Subject," LSU Health Sciences Center Medical Library, [lib.sh.lsuhscc.edu/ebooks/ebooks.php](http://lib.sh.lsuhscc.edu/ebooks/ebooks.php). [Accessed 8/11/10].

10. Brown University Library, "Digital Bookplates." Available online at [dl.lib.brown.edu/its/software/bookplates/](http://dl.lib.brown.edu/its/software/bookplates/). [Accessed 8/11/10].

11. Patricia Putney, Bonnie Buzzell, and Jean Rainwater, "Digital Bookplates: Using the OPAC for Stewardship in the Digital Age," Innovative Users Group Conference, April 2008, [dl.lib.brown.edu/its/software/bookplates/Digital\\_Bookplates\\_final\\_noanimation.ppt](http://dl.lib.brown.edu/its/software/bookplates/Digital_Bookplates_final_noanimation.ppt). [Accessed 8/11/10].

12. An e-mail message with a link to a eight-page questionnaire on Survey Monkey was sent to three electronic lists: ACQNET (8/7/2009), AUTOCAT (8/6/2009), and LIB-DEV (8/6/2009).

13. University of Florida Libraries, "Donor, Honoree and Special Purchases." Available online at <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/alephpro/catmet/donorguide.html> [Accessed 8/11/10].

14. Samuel Huang, in a conversation with author (March 19, 2010). ♪

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(*ACRL in Wash., D.C., cont. from page 414*) in translation? What are the best sources for reviews of foreign fiction of potential interest to the American reading public? How are translations used in research and teaching? These questions, and more, were discussed by three distinguished panelists in the program "Contemporary European Fiction in Translation," moderated by Richard Hacken (Brigham Young University).

Chad W. Post (director of Open Letter Books and managing director of the Three Percent Web site) spoke about statistics, issues, and trends in the U.S. translation market.

Alane Salierno Mason (founder and president of *Words Without Borders: An Online Magazine for International Literature*, and vice president and senior editor at W. W. Norton & Company) addressed cultural sen-

sitivities needed in selecting and promoting writers from abroad.

Edwin Gentzler (Translation Center, University of Massachusetts-Amherst) provided an overview of the history of translation studies as a growing academic field.

All three panelists are in charge of substantial Internet sites on the various aspects of translation; a comprehensive list of links for further reading is provided at the program Web site at [wess.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Upcoming\\_WESS\\_Conferences](http://wess.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Upcoming_WESS_Conferences).

This event was cosponsored by the Western European Studies Section, Literatures in English, and Slavic and East European Section, and the panel was organized by a program committee chaired by Heidi Madden (Duke University) and Melissa VanVuuren (James Madison University).—*Heidi Madden, Duke University, heidi.madden@duke.edu* ♪