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David Weinberg

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AUTOMATION IN THE ARCHIVES: RLIN AND THE ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPT CONTROL FORMAT

David Weinberg

Be it in the circulation or the cataloging department, automation systems are now something that most libraries have begun to accept if not welcome. In particular, the reference departments of many academic libraries use computer systems to serve their patrons in new ways. Over the last several years, computer networks have had a big impact on how libraries operate. The oldest of these networks, or computer utilities as they are often called, is OCLC (originally the Ohio College Library Center, now known as the Online Computer Library Center). A variety of libraries--academic, public, and private--can utilize OCLC's interlibrary loan system and also reduce their original cataloging workload by sharing all their records with each other.

A more recently established computer utility is RLIN, the Research Libraries Information Network of the Research Libraries Group (RLG). While RLIN offers many features similar to those shared by OCLC and other systems, it differs from these systems in the way it searches for a record. It also offers a variety of special formats, one of which is the Archives and Manuscript Control (AMC). Archives can now exploit computer technology just as libraries have for the past decade. Using a database designed specifically for archives and the unique arrangements and descriptions of each archival collection--not a system designed for a library and then adapted for an

archives--repositories are able to automate their collections. This paper discusses the concept of using the AMC format within a repository and the advantages of this format for archival collections.

Before discussing the advantages of such a format, some background information on earlier attempts to automate archival collections should be reviewed. While there have been many attempts to automate and many dollars spent on such projects, the systems only worked as well as the technology of the time afforded. The first attempt at using computer technology for arrangement of primary documentation was made by the Library of Congress's Manuscript Division in 1958. As the technology improved, many private developers, in addition to the Library of Congress and the National Archives, created automation systems that could be used in archival collections and manuscript repositories. Since it is not within the scope of this article to address the development of archival automation, the reader should consult Thomas Hickerson's Archives & Manuscripts: An Introduction to Automated Access.¹ This work provides a very good overview of computer applications in archival collections.

Computer applications developed through the 1970s were not "interactive," meaning that the computer processing had to be performed in a "batch" mode all at once and the results read after processing was complete. Therefore, there was little intellectual control over the data. The computer systems performed administrative functions and were able to supply lists of particular holdings, series, etc., but they had few searching capabilities using Boolean logic. Additionally, automated systems, although very helpful for the repository were limited only to that repository. This could be expected, given the nature of archives: each is unique, and although each collection follows the rules of the profession for description, inventory, etc., the actual cataloging records are in-house. Attempts to automate archives did exist; attempts to automate union lists for archives did not.

In general, union lists benefit not only the researcher, but also the archival repository. In addition to providing reference service to users of the collection, union lists aid archives in developing their own collection policies. To search a union listing of archival and manuscript holdings, a researcher's only tool was the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC). NUCMC does not represent all repositories, and those repositories listed usually report only a portion of their collections. Nevertheless, NUCMC is the best union listing since it provides a way for researchers to find the most suitable collections for their work. As with most printed catalogs, it has some problems: the level of detail is not complete, and updates are infrequent and, therefore, not always current. This leaves the researcher unsure about which collections need to be consulted and which do not.

An online database (much like the computer utilities used in libraries) can incorporate both of the needs described above. Both the RLIN and OCLC systems are suitable for union lists. Archival holdings can be entered into both networks via the AMC format of each system in using the MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging) record. The RLIN system does offer certain advantages such as subject access and complex searching techniques utilizing Boolean logic. Additionally, RLIN also offers administrative and management functions to aid the repository with its collections. Although the current OCLC database has numerous entries of primary documentation, those repositories that entered their records into OCLC tend to have little control over their records (and certainly no copyright of ownership unlike those collections in the RLIN system²).

Since archival repositories arrange their documents using the principles of provenance (the office of origin) and original order (the the organic order in which the documents were created), cataloging systems such as the Dewey Decimal Classification and the Library of Congress Subject Headings are of little use. In order for an

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plus a number of associate and special member libraries. In addition to the AMC format, the main RLIN database consists largely of records from the books format but also supports other specialized formats: machine readable data files, maps, recordings, scores, serials and visual materials as well as the special vernaculars of Chinese/Japanese/Korean (CJK) and the more recently implemented cyrillic characters. RLIN also supports specialized databases which include the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals; SCIPPIO (Sales Catalog Index Project Input Online), an Art Sales Catalog Database; ESTC, the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalog; and RLG Conspectus, a network wide collection development tool.⁵ All of these specialized databases, and the formats within the main database, are searchable from any terminal or personal computer connected with the RLG computer in Stanford.

The AMC format began at Yale University in 1981 after it received an United States Office of Education Title II-C grant and RLG received a grant from the Pew Memorial Trust.⁶ Such a project required a new MARC format, primarily due to the complexities of organizing and describing specialized materials such as archival and manuscript documents. The Yale staff developed a MARC format which was circulated in the archival community for preliminary evaluations prior to its widespread implementation in the RLIN system. To use such a format in a union listing, a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant enabled several committees to meet, representing the Society of American Archivists through its National Information Systems Task Force (NISTF), the Research Libraries Group, and the Library of Congress.⁷ The result was a new MARC format called the AMC.

The cataloging procedures adaptable for the new MARC format are described in Steven Hensen's Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts: A Cataloging Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries.⁸

This work augments Chapter 4 (Manuscript and Manuscript Collections) of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition (AACR 2). Since the introduction of AACR 2 states that the rules "are not recommended for specialist and archival libraries,"⁹ in its stead, Hensen's manual not only provides archivists and manuscript curators with a guide that addresses the problems of cataloging such materials, but it also develops a uniform system in language and descriptors. Since an automated union database is one of the goals of AMC, uniformity is crucial. Hence, this manual is required for all repositories that input records into AMC.

By January 1984, five archival collections on three campuses were chosen as pilot users: Yale University, Cornell University, the Labor Management Relations Documentation Center at Cornell, Stanford University, and the Hoover Institution at Stanford.¹⁰ While on a trial basis, Yale was the first of the five archives to input a record into the new AMC. The computer responded with a "transaction successful" and assigned a "production" ID number. Since this was the expected result, everyone involved with AMC was satisfied with creation of the first standardized machine readable record representing primary documentation. This occurred on 23 January 1984.¹¹ At that point, the other institutions were able to input their records thus creating the nation's first online information system for archival and manuscript collections.

Since that time, a variety of other archival and manuscript repositories have also agreed to join the system.¹² These repositories are special members of RLIN which adds a different composition to the current list of members. Previously, most of the members of the RLIN network were the large academic research libraries. The repositories not affiliated with the member libraries have been added to the special members category which also includes several law, art, and theological libraries. Considering the advantages of the AMC format, many of the major archival collections have joined the network.

Members range from the traditional academic archival collections (Yale University, for example) to the state archival collections (such as the State Historical Society of Wisconsin). The diversity of such members will ultimately make AMC a valued research tool as well as a valued management tool for each of the member archival collections.

The AMC is more than a superior online union list, however, because of the possibility of use of its extensive administrative controls and management techniques. Archives, by their very nature, have never had a standardized system for their collections which could cross institutional boundaries. Instead, a variety of manual systems are used in this setting: inventories, donor lists, accession lists and records indicating the file restrictions and expiration dates. Loose leaf binders often serve as a repository's only finding aid.

With AMC, the repository has several ways to organize and retrieve institutional records. The RLIN system has a variety of indexes to search its bibliographic database: author, title, subject phrase, conference phrase, etc. The database is equipped to search either a complete title, or a portion of the title, for example. For AMC, additional local indexes are available, which enable the archival staff to search the database amongst other indexes by accession number, donor name, and "form and genre."

Since AMC can produce a union list containing many archival holdings in addition to in-house data, information that is critical for the individual repository may need to be kept confidential. The "archival control segment" is part of AMC which contains information about the processing history, including such information as the donors of each collection, locations of the documents within the repository, etc. Some or all of this information can be "masked" from the union list and be available only to the owning repository, if so requested. (In a brief searching exercise, it was found that all of the AMC records were indeed "masked.")

The owning repository will see all the information presented in the display that is reproduced in Figure 2. This record indicates the status of the Malinowska papers housed in the Yale University Archives. The record has two sections. The first section represents the process control and the second section represents the action performance. The owning institution may elect to restrict some or all of the information that is provided. Restriction of the data available to other members can be achieved by entering a "n" in the process control display permit (PCDP, see below). This will restrict all information in this part of the record from non-owning institutions.

AMC/PROD Archival FUL/ARC CTYV84-A19:1 Catalog CTYV-MSA
 Record 1 of 2
 +B

RGPN MS19 HST02/16/84 T
 PCID 1 PCDP n PST P PSTD
 ACCN
 MATL Papers
 SRCE Malinowska, Valetta, 1972.
 ADDR
 MTHD
 PPRI OWNR
 PLOC AV38a1-6(34 archive, 1 carton)

ACID 1 ADP n AINS
 ACT Proj.cat.
 AIDN
 TAC 02/15/84 TFAC AIN AIR
 CONT

AUTH
 JUR
 METH
 SITE
 STAT
 AGT

Figure 2. Misc. document supplied by Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Some information may be of a rather sensitive nature, used strictly for administrative bookkeeping, and not necessarily for research or shared resources. This includes important administrative data such as the source of the material (SRCE representing the provenance), the type of material (MATL), the physical location of the material (PLOC), and the record group number (RGPN) within the repository. In the action performance section of Figure 2, the owning institution may elect to do the same as Yale did with this record by placing a "n" in the action display permit (ADP).¹³ The information in this section is for administrative notes by and for the repository. As Figure 2 illustrates, Yale is using this as an indication for "project cataloging," its code for a retrospective conversion of special collections under the Title II-C grant.¹⁴ All of this information is reserved for the exclusive use of the owning institution, unless otherwise specified.

In the long display, illustrated in Figure 3, the complete collection of Bronislaw Malinowski's papers are shown. For this example, the records were searched in AMC by the personal name (PN). This information, available to all users of the RLIN system, indicates the collection, period, size, organization, etc. about this collection at Yale University. For further information, this listing directs the user to an unpublished finding aid. AMC does, however, enable a repository to list its inventory by the folder level and even by the item (see again Figure 1 for the hierarchical relationship and provenance of each level) through a linking component in the format.

Yale chose to organize the Malinowski papers into four series: correspondence; writings, lectures, and research materials; the writings of other individuals; and special files. To find further information about the actual documentation, the in-house finding aids as indicated in this

display ("Indexes") are consulted. Other information which would be valuable for the researcher includes certain restrictions on the availability of the materials, the name of the repository that maintains the papers, and a summary. This is all listed on the display.

The bottom of the display lists the additional subject headings. The names, places, and organizations are entered as subject headings, and since they represent major figures in Malinowski's papers, they are assigned their own subject headings. This collection was called up by the author's personal name (PN), but could have easily been retrieved as well by any of the subject phrases (SP) listed in this example.¹⁵ (Using subject phrases will also bring up other material not related to the Malinowska papers.) The added entries in Figure 3 are not complete, primarily due to the bulk of information given. (The actual display of this record takes up eleven inches of text displayed on four standard size terminal screens.)

AMC/PROD Archival LON CTYV84-A19 Search PATV-URB
Record 1 OF 2

+

Malinowski, Bronislaw, 1884-1942.

Bronislaw Malinowski papers, 1869-1946 (inclusive),
1914-1939(bulk).

14 linear ft. (35 boxes)

Organization: Arranged into four series: 1. Correspondence.
II. Writings, Lectures, and Research Materials. III. Writings of
Others. IV. Special Files.

Fieldwork and correspondence excluding restricted material
available on microfilm (7,121 frames on 7 reels, 35 mm.) from
Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, at cost.
Order no. HM129.

Educated in Poland, Germany, England; field work in New
Guinea, Australia, Melanesia, 1914-1918; taught at the London
School of Economics and Political Science, 1921-1942.

Summary: Correspondence, manuscripts of writings and lectures, fieldwork notebooks, photographs, memorabilia, and other papers of Bronislaw Malinowski, cultural anthropologist, teacher, and author.

Gift of Mrs. Valetta Malinowski in 1972.

Correspondence of Elsie Malinowski and Jozefa Malinowski is restricted.

Indexes: Unpublished finding aids in repository. Microfilm guide is available.

Bronislaw Malinowski Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Other papers of Malinowski are at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Location: Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Box 1603A, Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520.

1. Boas, Franz, 1858-1942. 2. Bonaparte, Marie, Princess, 1882-1962. Economics and Political Science. 45. Yale University. Dept. of Anthropology. ... 51. Trobriand Islands--Social life and customs. 52. Asia. 53. Photoprints. 54. Anthropologists.

LCCN: MS741195

RGPN: MS 19

ID: CTYV84-A19

CC: 9554 DCF: PROC: b

Figure 3. RLIN display of Bronislaw Malinowski papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library

Another important feature of the AMC format which deserves an explanation is the partial (PAR) display. Figure 4 shows this display for the same collection of papers. Due to the restrictions that the owning institution placed on this collection in Figure 2, only the record group number (RGPN) is available to non-owning institutions. If, on the other hand, Yale entered a "y" in the PCDP and ADP fields of Figure 2, then all the information regarding the donor, the address of the donor, the location of the materials in the repository and whatever else the owning institution decided to enter

in the ARC Segment would be displayed in the Figure 4.

PROD Archival PAR CTYV-A19 Search PATV-URB
Record 1 of 2

+
Malinowski, Bronislaw, 1884-1942.
Bronislaw Malinowski papers, 1869-1946 (inclusive), 1914-1939
(bulk).
14 linear ft. (35 boxes)

LCCN: MS741195

O35: Film HM 129 (1827)

ID: CTYV84-A19

CC: 9554 DCF: Proc: b

RGPN MS 19

Figure 4. RLIN display of Bronislaw Malinowski papers,
Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

There are other benefits to owning institutions and to the research community-at-large. The concept of using RLIN as a management tool for archival collections as a single automated system replaces the operations formerly performed by many manual systems has been explored. Online access allows individual repositories to update their records by simply making the changes online. As a shared resource, users with a terminal connecting to the RLIN database will be able to survey a large collection of primary documentation and evaluate its importance to their research needs. Shared resources for the archival community enable each repository to use AMC and evaluate other collections across the country in order to determine future collection policy.

Where the university or college archives once operated in relative obscurity, AMC will bring a strengthened bond between archives and other research facilities on the campus. This will integrate access to different types of research materials. The main

database of the RLIN system contains eight different formats: Archives and Manuscript Control, Books, Machine Readable Data Files, Maps, Recordings, Scores, Serials and Visual Materials. It is possible to select any and all of the formats depending on what material is needed. Alan Tucker of RLG commented recently about RLIN and integration that "as a researcher I would like to be able to enter a search such as 'find personal name Gertrude Stein' and retrieve her published works, critical and biographical studies of Stein, a recording of Stein reading her own work, and another of a performance of 'Four Saints in Three Acts,' her personal papers...." ¹⁶ The integrated RLIN database will be able to retrieve such records by selecting books, recordings, and archives and manuscripts.

The AMC format is available to all RLG members. This includes the thirty-six member owners representing large research libraries, as well as the associate and special members of RLG. Many of the AMC contributors are part of the member owner libraries while others are affiliated through the associate and special member categories. A complete list of repositories inputting their records into AMC is provided in the Appendix. Since the research community goes beyond member institutions associated with RLG, the Cooperative Library Agency for Systems and Services (CLASS) in California brokers RLIN services to other libraries and information services throughout the country.

When AMC was in the planning stage, and shortly after it began accepting records in 1984, RLG appointed an Archives and Manuscripts Task Force. ¹⁷ This task force completed the first two charges to which they were assigned, namely to "develop protocols for reference service" and to "develop acceptable bibliographic standards for archival control records." These two charges have been discussed at length in this article.

The third charge was to "explore the feasibility of integrating records of the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) into the RLIN data

base." It was agreed in September 1985 that NUCMC would enter its records into AMC through the RLIN database at some point in the near future. Once this is achieved through some sort of retrospective conversion and agreement with respective institutions, AMC will indeed be the union listing of archives and manuscript repositories in the country. Unlike monographs entered into the books format, the very nature of manuscript materials (which are unique) does not enable their inclusion into the consortium of research libraries and major manuscript repositories unless all collections are accountable. This can only be achieved by incorporating the smaller and special collections that NUCMC represents into the RLIN database. Once this is possible, a comprehensive national union list will be in place, which will have the capacity to represent the current status of the repositories of the United States.

The fourth charge to the task force is tied directly to the previous charge: "encourage and support use of the AMC format by RLG members, and attract new members with significant archival/manuscript collections." ¹⁸ As the benefits of RLIN and AMC become better known, this should happen naturally, although "few good things happen naturally in libraries and archival repositories." ¹⁹ Those involved in the archival profession as well as the Research Libraries Group must actively promote the Archives and Manuscript Control format in order for it to reach its potential as a research and management tool for archives and manuscript repositories.

APPENDIX

The list below represents the total number of institutions that are adding their records into the Archives and Manuscript Control of RLIN.

Repository	NEH ReCon	NHPRC State Archives	Tape Loaded Records
Alabama Department of Archives and Manuscripts		X	
American Antiquarian Society			
American Philosophical Association			
Art Institute of Chicago			
Brigham Young University	X		
Brooklyn Museum			
Brown University	X		
California State Archives		X	
Columbia University	X		
Cornell University			
Cornell University - Labor Management Relations Documentation Center			
Cornell University - New York Historical Resources Center			X
Dartmouth College	X		
Folger Shakespeare Library			
Harvard University - 42 archival/library collections			
Johns Hopkins University	X		
Johns Hopkins University - Institute of the History of Medicine			
Johns Hopkins University - Medical Archives			
Johns Hopkins University - Peabody Conservatory			
Minnesota Historical Societ Museum of Modern Art		X	
National Archives and Records Administration			
National Gallery			
New York Historical Society	X		
New York Public Library			

New York State Archives		X	
New York University	X		
New York University - Labor Management Archives			
Northwestern University	X		
Pennsylvania State Archives		X	
Pennsylvania State University			
Pierpont Morgan Library			
Princeton Theological Seminary			
Rockefeller Archive Center			
Rutgers University	X		
Stanford University			
Stanford University - Hoover Institution Archives			
Stanford University - Special Collections			
State Historical Society of Wisconsin		X	
State University of New York, Albany			X
State University of New York, Buffalo			
State University of New York, Buffalo - Poetry and Rare Books	X		
Syracuse University			X
Temple University			
University of California, Berkeley	X		
University of California, Davis			
University of Michigan - Bentley Historical Library	X		
University of Michigan - Rare Books			
University of Pennsylvania			
University of Pennsylvania - Special Collections			
University of Rochester		X	
Utah State Archives	X		
Yale University			

Research Libraries Group, unpublished, 13 August 1986.

NEH ReCon: Retrospective conversion of selected significant holdings, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

NHPRC State Archives: The Seven State Archives Project, funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Tape Loaded Records: Spindex records gathered by Cornell's New York State Historical Documents Inventory and converted to the AMC format.

As of 13 October 1986, the repositories listed above have entered 75,138 records into AMC. 20

David Weinberg is the Assistant Curator of the Urban Archives Center, Temple University Libraries. He received his M.S. in Library and Information Science from Drexel University and is currently pursuing an advanced degree in urban history at Temple University.

The author would like to thank William E. Brown, Jr., Archivist at Yale University; John Hall, Associate Dean at Drexel University's College of Information Studies; and Nicole C.F. Bouvier, Project Director of the Fair Housing Council of Delaware County for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this paper. La Vonne Gallo, Library Coordinator at RLG also deserves thanks for promptly supplying information that would have been otherwise difficult to obtain.

NOTES

1 H. Thomas Hickerson, Archives & Manuscripts: An Introduction to Automated Access (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1981), 22.

2 See for example, "OCLC Copyrighted," College and Research Libraries News (February 1983): 37; and "RLG Declines to Copyright Database," Wilson Library Bulletin (September 1983): 7.

3 Quote from Harvard President Derek Bok in Lois R. Pearson, "Major Consortium Votes for Ballots; Harvard Quits Group," American Libraries (June 1978): 308. For a good overview of RLG's development, see Joel Shurkin, "The Rise and Fall and

Rise of RLG," American Libraries (July/August 1982): 450-55.

4 The member owners of RLG include: American Antiquarian Society; Brigham Young University; Brown University; Colorado State University; Columbia University; Cornell University; Dartmouth College; Emory University; Florida State University; Johns Hopkins University; Louisiana State University; The New York Historical Society; The New York Public Library; New York Univin, Johns Hopkins University; Irene Moran, University of California, Berkeley; Kathy Morton, Yale University; Roxanne Nilan, Stanford University; Bill Wallach, University of Michigan; Barbara Brown and Alan Tucker, RLG; Steven Hensen, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress; Harriet Ostroff, NUCMC editor, Library of Congress. As cited from "Archives and Manuscripts," unpublished, RLG, July 1984.

5 For information regarding the other special formats and special databases, contact the Library Operations Division, The Research Libraries Group, Inc., Jordan Quadrangle, Stanford, CA 94305. This is also the address for all other "unpublished" material that will be cited throughout this paper.

6 This funding was extremely important in establishing a foundation for AMC. The energies of the RLG staff, in particular Barbara Brown and Alan Tucker, were also very important in developing and testing the MARC format.

7 This is described more fully in "AMC Offers Access to Nation's Archival Resources," RLG News (September 1984): 3-4; Research Libraries Group Annual Report, 1983 (Stanford, CA: Research Libraries Group, 1984), 32-33; and "The Development of the RLIN AMC System," Documentation Newsletter (Fall 1983): 1-4.

8 Steven L. Hensen, Archives, Personal Papers,

and Manuscripts: A Cataloging Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1983).

9 Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1978), 1.

10 Research Libraries Group Annual Report, 1983, p. 33.

11 "AMC Offers Access to Nation's Archival Resources," p. 3.

12 For a complete list of repositories inputting their records into AMC, see the Appendix.

13 For a full reference to the field codes used in this section, see "Archival Control Segment," unpublished, RLG, May 1984.

14 Telephone interview with William E. Brown, Jr., Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University, 14 March 1985.

15 The available indexes for the AMC: Personal name, Corporate name, Title word/Title phrase, Related title, Related record ID, Subject phrase/Subject subdivision, Form and genre word, Donor word/Donor phrase, Geographic. Taken from "On-line Access to AMC Records," unpublished, RLG, May 1983.

16 "AMC Offers Access to Nation's Archival Resources," p. 4.

17 The Archives and Manuscripts Task Force includes: Tom Hickerson, Cornell University (chair); Tom Frusciano, New York University; Susan Martin, Johns Hopkins University; Irene Moran, University of California, Berkeley; Kathy Morton, Yale University; Roxanne Nilan, Stanford University; Bill Wallach,

University of Michigan; Barbara Brown and Alan Tucker, RLG; Steven Hensen, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress; Harriet Ostroff, NUCMC editor, Library of Congress. As cited from "Archives and Manuscripts," unpublished, RLG, July 1984.

18 All charges cited from "Archives and Manuscripts," unpublished, RLG, July 1984.

19 Letter received from William E. Brown, Jr., 6 June 1985.

20 Statistic for AMC records from RLIN (SHOW NEWS).