Revealing Invisible Collections:

Implementing the ARLIS/NA *Artists' Books Thesaurus* to Provide Online Access

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Abstract—The University of Louisville's Margaret M. Bridwell Art Library is one of the first institutions to employ the Art Libraries Society of North America's *Artists' Books Thesaurus* (ARLIS/NA *ABT*) vocabulary to describe images of artists' books within a CONTENTdm collection. Over the course of three months, the art librarian and a graduate intern worked with multiple stakeholders to build a digital collection designed to reveal unique structures for patron browsing and searching. This article describes the implementation of the project, detailing the process of creating an online artists' books index from inception to the initial upload of final records. Suggestions are offered for future engagement with the ARLIS/NA *Artists' Books Thesaurus* for digital access to artists' books.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries that house artists' books collections often struggle with the competing needs to provide patron access while preserving the collection. Storing books in controlled, secure spaces often results in barriers between the end user and these "invisible" collections. To combat this scenario, many cultural institutions have created online resources that connect users to surrogates representing items in these collections. To optimize users' experiences with these online resources, metadata must accurately

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reflect the often unique qualities of artists' books, such as binding style, production technique, and materials.

To meet the challenges of providing access while preserving rare materials, in the summer of 2016 the University of Louisville's Margaret M. Bridwell Art Library undertook the process of creating an online Artists' Books Index using CONTENTdm. The authors concluded that the inflexibility of the integrated library system was too great a barrier to surmount and opted for a stand-alone product. With the teaching and research purposes of the collection in mind, the project planning stages focused on strategies to create a browsable, interactive tool for both students and researchers. These strategies included the use of high-resolution images, fair use best practices, rich metadata specific to the construction of each artist's book, and structured categories for browsing.

The result was a new online Artists' Books Index (ABI) that acts as a gateway between users and the secured collection. Upon completion of the internship, this CONTENTdm site featured eighty-six of the 320 items in the collection, including multiple images per record that highlight structural aspects of each book's construction.

Knowing that the concerns of access and security are intertwined, the authors sought to achieve both objectives through the continuation of a locked-door security practice, coupled with an option for digital discovery through the new ABI. Andrea Chemero, Caroline Siegel, and Terrie Wilson state that "creating catalogs using images of artists' books would be a major way of increasing access to and promoting the use of collections while at the same time aiding in their preservation."[1] In her 2015 article, Eva Athanasiu maintains that "detailed metadata, user-friendly interfaces, high-quality images, and intuitive browsing functions" are all requirements for successful online mediation of artists' books collections and are necessary to integrate collections into a philosophical "network of belonging."[2] In Athanasiu's schema, the network resides at the nexus of artists' books, readers, and libraries.[3] The ABI project was accomplished by carefully considering and executing elements of three key operational areas distilled from Athanasiu's recommendations: metadata, image copyright, and interface. While copyright is not addressed directly by Athanasiu, the ethical use of high-quality images in an online platform requires consideration of this subject. Metadata, specifically the implementation of terms from the *ABT*, was at the core of this project's development. The authors estimate that approximately 60 percent of the total time of this project was dedicated to metadata, while the other 40 percent was divided between image production (10 percent), copyright analysis (20 percent), and interface development (10 percent). Therefore, metadata influenced all other aspects of the ABI, from the content of images to the organization of the site.

1. Andrea Chemero, Caroline Seigel, and Terrie Wilson, "How Libraries Collect and Handle Artists' Books," *Art Documentation* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 23.

2. Eva Athanasiu, "Belonging: Artists' Books and Readers in the Library," *Art Documentation* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 337, doi:10.1086/683388.

3. Athanasiu, 333.

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THE INVISIBLE COLLECTION PROBLEM

Libraries that house collections of artists' books often struggle to provide sufficient access to these visually rich materials.[4] Athanasiu writes that "the potential usefulness of artists' books is too often mitigated by the perception of the primary need for protection, and their coveted presence in the context of a [gallery, library, archive, and/or museum] collection."[5] The desire to preserve items often means they are housed in controlled, locked environments, which results in "invisible" collections. Librarians have struggled often with the issues of uncataloged or under-cataloged materials in special collections.[6] Complete MARC records still may not include subject headings that provide adequate access to artists' books based upon technique, material, and binding style. Moreover, a catalog as the primary access point for a locked-door collection presents "limited opportunity for the patron to gain a further glimpse into the entirety of the collection,"[7] making it a problematic tool for users.

The invisible nature of artists' books collections leads to a reliance on in-person opportunities to garner recognition, such as teaching and exhibitions, which are limited in their reach and scope.[8] With only these options, a collection suffers from limited patron awareness of titles and a subsequent lack of material use. In a library in which the primary users are undergraduate studio art students, these modes of sharing are not ideal for their preferred information behavior. Through browsing, students build a visual vocabulary, overcome creative blocks, keep up-to-date with new artists, and immerse themselves in creative stimuli.[9] The highly visual nature of artists' books may be useful for all of these purposes; however, a lack of material access impedes the ability to browse, hindering discovery.

Allison Jai O'Dell argues that bookbinding techniques are better illustrated with visual representations than with text. Her presentation describes the process of creating the *ABT* using a social media platform for submissions of photographs, which were then curated by an editorial team.[10] The article declares the *ABT* to be a success-

4. Nola Farman, "Artists' Books: Managing the Unmanageable," *Library Management* 29, no. 4/5 (May 30, 2008): 324, doi:10.1108/01435120810869101.

5. Athanasiu, "Belonging," 335.

6. Beth M. Whittaker, "'Get It, Catalog It, Promote It': New Challenges to Providing Access to Special Collections," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Book, Manuscripts, and Cultural History* 7, no. 2 (2006): 121.

7. Annie Herlocker, "Shelving Methods and Questions of Storage and Access in Artists' Book Collections," *Art Documentation* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 67–76, doi:10.1086/665332.

8. Fred A. Hillbruner, "The Automated Catalog of the Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago," *Art Libraries Journal* 18, no. 1 (January 1993): 26, doi:10.1017/S0307472200008191; Michelle A. Stover, "Categorizing the Unique: Analyzing Artists' Books for a Framework of Description" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2005), 13–14, https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/record/uuid:88b378a9-4b04-4a52-9a42-a56136d8b6d8.

9. Polly P. Frank, "Student Artists in the Library: An Investigation of How They Use General Academic Libraries for Their Creative Needs," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 25, no. 6 (November 1999): 445–55, doi:10.1016/S0099-1333(99)00077-4.

10. For further background on the development of the *ABT*, see Allison Jai O'Dell, "Introducing the Artists' Books Thesaurus," ACRL Arts Section Virtual Midwinter Discussion Forum, January 6, 2016, https://www.slideshare.net/allisonjai/introducing-the-artists-books-thesaurus-56751787.

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ful proof of concept and calls for future integration of the thesaurus into library catalogs, although challenges remain with ingesting images into catalogs.[11] *ABT* terms previously have been integrated into the Massachusetts College of Art and Design's visual index of their artists' books collection, which is powered by WordPress. The resulting data from the MassArt project shows that over 280 unique visitors viewed over 6,000 pages of the site over the course of one year, highlighting the promise of *ABT* terms and online platforms as facets to a solution for the invisible collection problem.[12]

CATALOGING AS A MEANS OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ACCESS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Descriptive cataloging of artists' books is a crucial component for user access.[13] Fred Hillbruner observes that, rather than ask for books by author or title, patrons instead use descriptions of "binding method, the press, or the method of printing."[14] *Artists' Books: A Cataloguers' Manual* acknowledges that "the physical description area may prove inadequate to describe [artists' books] fully"[15] and dictates the use of controlled vocabulary such as the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* and the Library of Congress Subject Headings.[16] The cataloger is directed to use the book itself as a source of information, as well as secondary sources such as "published works, booksellers' catalogues or conversations/correspondence with the artists, or using the cataloguer's expertise."[17] The cataloging techniques described in this manual are attentive to the elements that would best describe various works without unnecessarily swaying the user's preconceptions about the content of the book.

Louise Kulp traces the issues facing catalogers of artists' books, including the challenges of cataloging objects that are in some ways more like art objects than bibliographic specimens.[18] She states that "most authors recommend using [AACR2, LCSH, and MARC], along with extensive prose notes, to strike a balance between the science and the art of cataloging."[19] Some authors developed their own proposed standards for cataloging artists' books. To that end, Hillbruner developed a granular system at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago that allowed for ten types[20] of special head-

11. Allison Jai O'Dell, "The Visual Vocabulary: skos:example and the Illustrated Artists' Books Thesaurus," *Journal of Library Metadata* 15, no. 3/4 (July 2015): 241–51, doi:10.1080/19386389.2015.1103086.

12. Caitlin Pereira, Abi Sweeny, and Greg Wallace, "From Paper to Pixels: Digitizing Artists' Books at MassArt to Promote Physical Interaction" (poster presented at ARLIS/NA and VRA 3rd Joint Conference, Seattle, WA, March 8–12, 2016), https://www.arlisna.org/images/conferences/2016/poster21-Pereira.pdf.

13. Athanasiu, "Belonging," 335; Ann K. D. Myers and William Andrew Myers, "Opening Artists' Books to the User: An Example with Potential Approaches," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, & Cultural Heritage* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 66.

14. Hillbruner, "The Automated Catalog," 26.

15. Maria White, Patrick Perratt, Liz Lawes, and ARLIS/UK & Ireland Cataloguing and Classification Committee, *Artists' Books: A Cataloguers' Manual* (London: ARLIS/UK & Ireland, 2006), 28.

16. White et al., 32.

17. White et al., 32.

18. Louise Kulp, "Artists' Books in Libraries: A Review of the Literature," *Art Documentation* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 5–10.

19. Kulp, 7.

20. These types consist of binding, printing method, authorship, publication format, literary format, visual analysis, subject/context, production format, material, and other. Hillbruner, "The Automated Catalog," 27.

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ings describing artists' books and a schema that allowed for up to twenty descriptors. Michelle Stover used the grounded method to develop a theoretical list of fifteen open-ended searchable fields describing bibliographic data, eighteen yes/no categories describing content, and three menus describing structure, which she suggests may be implemented in a database describing artists' books. She proposed that four of these open-ended categories—artist, distributor, publisher, and press—be tied to indices generated by the terms entered in the database.[21] Nola Farman critiques Stover's proposed cataloging model, stating that the librarian "must show some skills that could be associated with forensic science!"[22] Mary Anne Dyer and Yuki Hibben chronicled the process of creating a local genre heading index at Virginia Commonwealth University, the results of which were integrated into their catalog as a way for users to search and browse based upon their own interests.[23] Ann Myers and William Myers considered the complexities of cataloging a single sample artist's book and provided two possible schemas, one of which includes genre headings. The authors ultimately call for "fuller records . . . balancing the need for controlled vocabulary and fuller notes with time and budget constraints."[24] Overall, the literature on metadata standards for artists' books reflects the lack of shared controlled vocabularies to describe their structures.[25]

O'Dell situates creator metadata as a crucial component of patrons' information-seeking behavior involving artists' books. The author developed a method for using the Encoded Archival Context—Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (EAC-CPF) metadata standard to convert MARC Authority records into a browsable interface designed for the end user.[26] This work is in addition to her collaboration on the *ABT*, which seeks to resolve the expressed need for a controlled vocabulary specific to the attributes of artists' books. At the time of publication, the *ABT* is considered to be a beta product, but its usefulness for cataloging artists' books moving forward is apparent. The resounding call in the literature for standardization of metadata for artists' books informed the authors' decision to utilize the *ABT*, despite its beta status.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

In the past, the library staff at the Bridwell Art Library created both an internal Microsoft Access database describing each artist's book, as well as a publicly available Libguide. This Libguide was organized by the primary author's last name and only listed the book title, author, call number, and two thumbnail photos for a limited portion of the collection. Knowing the instructional and research potential of this collection that was largely untapped, in summer 2016 the authors sought a solution to this

21. Stover, "Categorizing the Unique," 42.

22. Farman, "Artists' Books," 324.

23. Mary Anne Dyer and Yuki Hibben, "Developing a Book Art Genre Headings Index," *Art Documentation* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 57–66, doi:10.1086/664914.

24. Myers and Myers, "Opening Artists' Books," 66.

25. Hillbruner, "The Automated Catalog," 26; Myers and Myers, "Opening Artists' Books," 66.

26. Allison Jai O'Dell, "Book Artists Unbound: Providing Access to Creator Metadata with EAC-CPF," *Art Documentation* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 267–78, doi:10.1086/678527.241.

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accessibility problem. An online tool was selected because of the ubiquity of internet access, as well as the possibility for rich image and metadata delivery. While online platforms are not idealized as a panacea for the problems of access to special collections, many libraries have created online exhibits or indices of their collections.[27]

COPYRIGHT CONSIDERATIONS

A review of copyright related to artists' books became necessary to insure the ABI's alignment with both copyright law and best practices in the field. In 2004, Ann Shincovich encouraged a proactive stance toward fair use for artists' books, with the caveat that additional standards should be developed to guide image professionals.[28] Alexandra Purcell considers the tension between artists' books creators and institutions that digitize and share their works for education and research purposes. She concludes that digital surrogates serve merely as references to the actual work, and that "displaying these special collections digitally can be highly transformative and allows for more educational and research access, as well as further patron awareness of and engagement with these items."[29] Five web pages reviewed by Purcell—belonging to the Museum of Modern Art, Reed College, University of Michigan, the Five Colleges of Ohio, and the Smithsonian—address copyright through varying rights statements. Some collections include only collection-level copyright statements, while others provide a statement for each book. These statements are aligned with best practices for the fair use of copyright works utilized in an educational (rather than commercial) outlet. Purcell advocates for the use of an acquisitions form that documents rights and permissions, developing an opt-in or opt-out policy for digital exhibits, and providing a tool that allows copyright holders to contact an institution to request that their work be removed from a digital collection.[30] When addressing digital exhibitions, Purcell recommends that each individual item be accompanied by metadata and a rights statement. In addition, limits to the quantity of images should be observed so that the inclusion of an object in a digital exhibit does not affect the market for any artist's book. Finally, the appropriate technologies should be implemented to ensure that downloads are limited in size.[31] The Bridwell Art Library project had the same goals but decided to serve a further transformative purpose of allowing scholars to search using relevant vocabulary based upon their research needs.

To ensure the initiative towards digital access worked within the institutional framework, a project proposal was created for the University Libraries' Digital Initiatives Department. This department, housed in the Archives and Special Collections

27. For example, see Otis College of Art and Design (http://collections.otis.edu/cdm/search/collection/artbook/order/creato/ad/asc/cosuppress/1), School of the Art Institute of Chicago (http://digital-libraries.saic.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/jfabc), and Smithsonian Libraries (http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=&tag.cstype=all&fq=data_source%3A%22Smithsonian+Libraries%22&fq=object_type%3A%22Artists%27+books+%28books%29%22).

28. Ann C. Shincovich, "Copyright Issues and the Creation of a Digital Resource: Artists' Books Collection at the Frick Fine Arts Library, University of Pittsburgh," *Art Documentation* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 12.

29. Alexandra Purcell, "Artists' Books, Digital Exhibitions, and the Copyright Issues that Surround Them," *Art Documentation* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 329, doi:10.1086/683387.

30. Purcell, 327–28.

31. Purcell, 328–29.

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unit, serves all campus library branches. The ABI proposal established the need for an online resource, described rights information, and assessed various aspects of the collection (i.e., how many items would be photographed and cataloged, the existing metadata available, etc.). The project proposal outlined the transformative nature that would allow for a fair use of images in this context. The purpose, which was highly favorable toward teaching, research, and scholarship, was a major factor supporting fair use. The major factor opposing fair use was the fact that artists' books are highly creative works that the university is making accessible on the web for repeated or long-term use. Ultimately, through consultation with the university's Endowed Chair of Scholarly Communication, the transformative nature of the project weighed more heavily in favor of fair use. Along with the integration of institutional fair use practices, the authors consulted both the College Art Association (CAA) and Association of Research Libraries' (ARL) codes. The CAA *Code of Best Practices in Fair Use in the Visual Arts*[32] (CAA *Code*) and the Association of Research Libraries *Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Academic and Research Libraries*[33] (ARL *Code*) present principles for the fair use of images in digital projects. While the users of these documents do not always overlap, both were relevant to the ABI's execution.

DETERMINING PLATFORM AND INTERFACE

Once the digital project proposal was accepted, CONTENTdm was selected as the ABI's web platform. Although O'Dell intended the *ABT* to be used in conjunction with a library catalog,[34] the Bridwell Art Library did not have the resources to integrate the project into the University Libraries' online catalog. The University Libraries already hosts and supports its own instance of CONTENTdm, and the Digital Initiatives Department has a robust history of supporting over three dozen collections in this product, making it the de facto choice.[35] Beyond its status as the university standard, CONTENTdm's features, such as the ingestion of images and the creation of compound items with accompanying metadata, made it an optimal choice.

Along with investigating the issues surrounding metadata, copyright, and best practices, during the early stages of the project the authors reviewed online artists' books access tools created by other institutions. While considering the online features of the ABI, the University Libraries web designer was consulted to ensure that the final site could be searched and browsed easily by the end user. The browsability of the ABI was critical to decision-making in this area, as a review of the information-seeking behavior of both student and professional artists revealed a preference for browsing as a method of discovery over direct searches.

32. College Art Association, *Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for the Visual Arts*, February 2015, http://www.collegeart.org/pdf/fair-use/best-practices-fair-use-visual-arts.pdf.

33. Association of Research Libraries, *Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Academic and Research Libraries*, January 2012, http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/code-of-best-practices-fair-use.pdf.

34. Allison Jai O'Dell, "The Visual Vocabulary," 249.

35. University of Louisville, University Libraries Digital Collections, http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/collections.

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A study of student habits by Polly Frank found that "general browsing clearly ranked as [the] search method of choice."[36] Additionally, Frank suggests that students use a "foot-in-the-door" strategy, meaning they find one item of interest, then investigate the books near it on the shelves.[37] However, Frank's study notes that the internet was not used prominently by students at the time. This marks a shift from the more recent study by Patrick Lo and Wilson Chu, who found that "in the digital age, the internet is integral to the art and design students' practices and is often the first resource consulted when searching for either information or inspiration."[38] According to their study, students still use the physical library. However, in the context of an invisible collection, the ability to practice a foot-in-the-door approach with the physical collection is not plausible. Instead, the ABI provides browsability online in order to reconcile the needs for serendipitous discovery and collection security. In looking at professional artists' habits, William Hemmig found that information is sought to fulfill four primary needs: inspiration, specific visual elements, knowledge of materials and techniques, and marketing and career guidance.[39] While the last of these needs was not affiliated with the project, it was clear that the ABI would align with the first three. These considerations informed the ultimate design of the site.

METADATA DECISIONS

The existing practice for metadata creation was to utilize the in-house *CONTENTdm Cookbook*[40] created by the university's Digital Initiatives Department. Built on a Dublin Core (DC) metadata set, this guide standardizes how University Libraries maps data in CONTENTdm. The *Cookbook* already implemented an art-related crosswalk for the University of Louisville's Visual Resources Center, but there were still unmet needs for ABI metadata. Since artists' books are a hybrid between traditional books and artworks, elements from both formats needed to be combined and revised to create a customized ABI crosswalk. The new crosswalk needed categories that would anticipate users' interests to facilitate browsing. These specialized categories were narrowed down to style, material, and technique.

The style field reflects the construction of the book (i.e., "Blizzard books," "Concertina bindings"). Due to this field's need to utilize a controlled vocabulary specific to artists' books, it implemented *ABT* terms. Material and technique rely on the long-established Getty *Art & Architecture Thesaurus*[41] as both fields were able to use established art-making terms, such as "Thread" for material and "Letterpress printing" for

36. Frank, "Student Artists in the Library," 450.

37. Frank, 450.

38. Patrick Lo and Wilson Chu, "Information for Inspiration: Understanding Information-Seeking Behaviour and Library Usage of Students at the Hong Kong Design Institute," *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 46, no. 2 (June 2015): 115, doi:10.1080/00048623.2015.1019604.

39. William Hemmig, "An Empirical Study of the Information-Seeking Behavior of Practicing Visual Artists," *Journal of Documentation* 65, no. 4 (July 2009): 694.

40. Rachel Howard, "CONTENTdm Cookbook: Recipes for Metadata Entry for UofL Digital Initiatives," 2015, http://webservices.library.louisville.edu/contentdm/files/cookbook.pdf.

41. The Getty Research Institute, *Art & Architecture Thesaurus Online*, updated March 7, 2017, http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/.

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technique. For the crosswalk, style and technique were mapped to the DC format field, while material was already an optional DC field. Before the crosswalk was complete, a controlled vocabulary would be chosen for the creator field. The Visual Resources Center crosswalk utilized the Getty *Union List of Artist Names*,[42] while the original *CONTENTdm Cookbook* standards preferred the Library of Congress Authorities (LC Authorities).[43] Again, focusing on the hybrid nature of artists' books in terms of both objects and collaborative creators, the LC Authorities were chosen as the controlled vocabulary for this field. With this decision, the crosswalk was complete and approved by the digital initiatives librarian.

THE PROCESS

IMPLEMENTING FAIR USE

As stated previously, both the ARL and CAA codes were reviewed and integrated into the workflow. The ARL *Code* provides a set of consensus principles developed by scholars to represent "a clear and conscientious articulation of the values" of the academic research library community.[44] The CAA *Code* also presents consensus principles for users of intellectual property in the visual arts community. It is not a prescriptive document, but rather "an approach to reasoning about the application of fair use" within the visual arts.[45] Principle five of the CAA *Code*—"Online Access to Related Collections in Memory Institutions"—states that "memory institutions and their staffs may invoke fair use to . . . enable digital access to copyrighted materials in their collections and to make those collections available online, with appropriate search tools."[46] Two limitations involved fair use notices and the institutional responsibility to provide a method of contact for further information. These were addressed by a written statement with each book record in the ABI welcoming fair use and providing a point of contact. Additionally, the entire collection has a statement reiterating that the university does not make copyright claims to items in the index, and that individuals should interpret fair use guidelines and/or obtain copyright permission from the rightsholder(s) of each individual work.[47] The statement also links to the university's page concerning fair use.[48] Three further limitations of principle five of the CAA *Code* were observed in the ABI project. To ensure images are not too large or small for scholarly use, they are available for download in a maximum resolution of 500×500 pixels. By providing the full bibliographic entries for each item, the project ensured that they were "accompanied by attribution as is customary."[49] Finally, all

42. The Getty Research Institute, *Union List of Artist Names Online*, updated February 7, 2017, http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/ulan/.

43. Library of Congress, The Library of Congress Name Authority File, http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names.html.

44. ARL *Code of Best Practices*, 3.

45. CAA *Code of Best Practices*, 7.

46. CAA *Code of Best Practices*, 13.

47. "About the Index," Artists' Books Index, University of Louisville, University Libraries Digital Collections, http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/description/collection/abi/#about.

48. "Fair Use," Copyright Guidelines and Resources, University of Louisville, http://louisville.edu/copyright/basics/fair-use.

49. CAA *Code of Best Practices*, 10.

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photos are "augmented with all appropriate and reasonably available metadata."[50] Incorporation of these five limitations of principle five of the CAA *Code* did not limit the scope of the ABI project and demonstrates that the University of Louisville Libraries respect the disciplinary practices pertaining to the fair use of images.

Principles four and seven of the ARL *Code* were most relevant to the ABI project. Principle four states, "It is fair use to create digital versions of a library's special collections and archives and to make these versions electronically accessible in appropriate contexts."[51] The most pertinent limitation of principle four concerns the impact of digitization on the commercial market. In the majority of cases, artists' books are published in limited editions and do not come up for sale often on the secondary market. Based upon this limitation, the art librarian may decide that specific titles could be excluded from the collection until works have gone out of print. Principle seven of the ARL *Code* addresses the transformative nature of works forming part of a database. It states "it is fair use for libraries to develop and facilitate the development of digital databases of collection items to enable nonconsumptive analysis across the collection for both scholarly and reference purposes."[52] The only limitation from this principle revolves around nonconsumptive use, and it discourages "ordinary reading" of materials.[53] The ABI was specifically designed to show representative portions of each book, with a focus on binding style. None of the materials have been digitized in their entirety, and so cannot be used for ordinary reading. Having taken these principles and limitations into consideration, the authors then moved forward with several practical elements of the project.

CREATING METADATA

Staff established a workflow using Google Sheets as the primary platform for managing the entries. While Microsoft Access and Excel are often the customary choices for managing metadata, Google Sheets allows multiple editors to contribute simultaneously (unlike Excel) and is compatible with both Mac and PC operating systems (unlike Access). The final version of this data eventually would be uploaded into an Access database, but the working copy was stored online in a shared Google Drive folder until entries were considered finished. These entries were not finalized until three passes had been made over each book. The art librarian and graduate intern conducted the first two passes separately. Terms were applied after reviewing each item's colophon, mining information from artists' or vendors' websites, and gathering ideas from documentation provided by vendors—such as printed correspondence and descriptions—at the time of acquisition. Example images attached to *ABT* entries were referenced when these resources did not provide enough information pertaining to a book's construction. On rare occasions, faculty in the Department of Fine Art would be consulted if there was not enough information to create thorough metadata.

50. CAA *Code of Best Practices*, 11.
51. ARL *Code of Best Practices*, 20.
52. ARL *Code of Best Practices*, 25.
53. ARL *Code of Best Practices*, 25.

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For example, the printmaking faculty member helped determine the technique used for the printing of a book that was lacking other reference sources. By using all of these tactics when reviewing each book, the authors were as exhaustive as possible in creating metadata for the style, material, and technique fields. The metadata for the book *Ephemera: Poems* offers a glimpse at how many terms could be applied to a single record, highlighting the necessity of unlimited terms in these fields (Table 1).

After processing each book individually, the authors came together to do the final review. This joint review allowed them to apply terms that were missed before they improved their familiarity with the *ABT* vocabulary. Books reviewed early in the project were often lacking key terms that the authors did not discover in the *ABT* until later in the process. This collaborative review also allowed them to debate whether chosen terms were the most appropriate. Given the complex nature of artists' books as objects, there were often times a term could arguably work and simultaneously seem like a misnomer. Coming together and discussing each entry's terms helped create a cohesive standard for the database's entries. While this three-step process was time-consuming and rigorous, the outcome was rich entries that reflected as many styles, materials, and techniques as possible.

Once all one hundred books chosen for the initial phase of this project had undergone the three-step metadata process, the Google Sheet was converted into an Excel document and uploaded into Access. The digital initiatives librarian created the Access database, which included customized fields based on the crosswalk developed for the ABI. It had fifteen fields, and each was checked thoroughly for consistent formatting based on the *CONTENTdm Cookbook* standards. In the process of reviewing the final entries, the authors realized there were fourteen with special characters (such as letters with accents, umlauts, or tildes) in the title, author, or description fields.

Table 1. A Condensed Record for *Ephemera: Poems*.

Title	Creator	Publisher	Style	Material	Technique
Ephemera: poems.	Pinsky, Robert; Kunc, Karen	Blue Heron Press	Concertina bindings; Accordion bindings; Fold-out books; French door books; Hollow back bindings; Adhesive bindings; Illustrated books; Poems; Relief prints; Letterpress prints; Woodcuts; Photopolymer prints; Colophons; Editioned works; Hand-bound books	Imitation leather	Letterpress printing; Intaglio printing; Woodcut (process); Deckle edges; Accordion pleats

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These special characters would require additional coding based on the American National Standards Institute syntax. At this point in the process, two-thirds of the project timeline had elapsed, and the first upload needed to be completed within a month before the graduate intern finished her practicum. Due to these constraints, these fourteen entries were excluded from the initial upload in order to save time with coding and troubleshooting.

The digital initiatives librarian uploaded the completed eighty-six entries and their images. Before records were imported, the new list of controlled vocabulary from the *ABT* had to be added to CONTENTdm's existing thesaurus; this list was generated based on the style field in Access. Once terms were indexed in CONTENTdm, the upload was completed. With the exception of one error in the database that required correction and an anomalous issue with an image file, the upload of the initial entries went smoothly and relatively quickly.

PROCESSING IMAGES

The ABI was designed to provide multiple, high-resolution images for each record. To accomplish this, the graduate intern trained a student worker to use equipment and shoot optimal images. These images focused on book construction and technique for two reasons. First, images were produced to highlight elements described in the style, material, and technique categories of the metadata. Second, photos were shot with an emphasis on these elements to support the fair use argument that the project is a transformative use of copyrighted works.

A Nikon D5200 camera, borrowed from the University Libraries' main branch, was used to shoot all images as raw files. Books were shot using a product lighting table in an art department's photography studio. This lighting was not archival quality, but books were lit for short periods of time, and the table was turned off between each book to minimize exposure. The lighting of the table produced professional, high-quality images of the books that would have been very difficult to achieve otherwise. Once usable images were identified, each image was quickly edited in Photoshop. Editing consisted primarily of cropping, adjusting perspective, and optimizing the lighting. All images were then filed using a naming convention that attached them to appropriate records in the MS Access database. Images were subsequently ready to be loaded into the CONTENTdm system and awaited retrieval through the website. Once the workflow for photographing and processing images had been established, work could begin on designing the front-end interface for patron use.

NAVIGATING THE WEBSITE

The specialized crosswalk categories were at the forefront of the ABI website design. The categories of style, material, and technique are featured prominently on the homepage for the collection, hyperlinking to lists of the metadata terms associated with each (Figure 1).

These links lead to a queried list of all items in the collection with that term applied, simplifying the browsing process for researchers who are not searching for

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Figure 1. Screenshot of the Artists' Books Index homepage, http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/abi/. Please see the online edition of *Art Documentation* for a color version of this image.

specific items. However, the fourth link featured on the homepage, "All Books," takes searchers to the complete list of items in the ABI with both a search bar at the top and filterable options on the left sidebar. The linked list on the home screen, the search bar, and the filterable sidebar assist with different styles of browsing and searching.

Additionally, when viewing the individual record for a book, a searcher can continue to explore the collection through linked terms. The creator, subject, style, material, and technique fields in an individual record contain its assigned hyperlinked terms (Figure 2). If a searcher finds a book because of an interest in the binding style, and in viewing it wants to see more items using the same material, this path of discovery can be followed throughout the collection. This serendipitous browsing allows the searcher to see the different ways creators incorporate the same elements to produce wildly different books, aiding in the processes of information- and inspiration-seeking.

REFLECTION

If this project had been better resourced, the authors would have improved several aspects concerning photography, cataloging research, and integration of ABI records into the library catalog during this initial phase. First, more photographic training and research could have improved the quality of image production while saving time with the learning curve that comes with new equipment. Moreover, the equipment was limited to that which could be borrowed. More choice and control over the equipment could have improved the process and the final images. Second, additional graduate or student worker research would have been helpful when preparing for cataloging

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Figure 2. Screenshot of the record for *Ephemera: Poems* in the Artists' Book Index, http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/abi/id/398/rec/3. Please see the online edition of *Art Documentation* for a color version of this image.

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using the *ABT* terms. While the authors were able to research books thoroughly, they were slowed by the constant need to compile metadata sources. Having a person dedicated to this task would have expedited the processing of metadata. Moreover, employing a long-term graduate assistant or student worker until the conclusion of all uploads would have been helpful.

Finally, having a better understanding of systems would have allowed the ABI to connect the CONTENTdm records with WorldCat Discovery records, which would be similar to the approach of the Artists' Books at MassArt project. This would achieve the *ABT*'s intended goal of integrating into library catalogs rather than stand-alone collection tools. Moving forward, the ABI's additions will be managed only by the art librarian for the foreseeable future. Therefore, limited resources will continue to be a barrier to speedy progress. While there is room for improvement to the upload process under different circumstances, the authors were still able to produce this project with the resources at hand and within the confined time limit. Uploading eighty-six entries to a newly developed site moves toward the goal of housing records for all items in the collection. At the time of publication, this means repeating the metadata creation and photography processes for approximately 230 more items. Moreover, the library continues to add to the Artists' Books Collection, which means uploads will be ongoing as new items are acquired. Once the current collection is processed, this integration of new items should be simpler. Piecemeal additions will be less time-consuming, and the art librarian's growing familiarity with the *ABT* terms will also increase the speed of cataloging. The *ABT* will continue to be referenced frequently throughout future uploads since it is an evolving tool.

Moving forward, there are other considerations that go beyond the project's context. As other scholars have stated, a shared controlled vocabulary for artists' books is overdue. While the *ABT* is a prominent step in the right direction for catalogers, the authors identified challenges which may be addressed by future developers of the *ABT* and those utilizing it. In most cases, the *ABT* provided ample descriptors for the books cataloged thus far from the collection. A few additional terms may be added to the *ABT* over time; examples that would be helpful for the books in the ABI include "strip binding," "removable spine," "English binding," "drum leaf binding," "hinge spine," and "Byzantine binding." Additionally, some terms lack scope notes, as well as photographs, making catalogers reliant on other sources for term clarification.

Both the librarian and intern had some familiarity with various book binding processes, but the visualization of binding techniques was invaluable when grappling with less-familiar terms. The small number of images was a barrier to successful use of the *ABT*. It is designed as a community-based project that solicits images online from any source; however, such images must be submitted by a person who has "the appropriate permissions in place by the illustration creator in order for the work to be added to the Artists' Books Thesaurus."[54] More work is needed to facilitate the

54. "Artists' Books Thesaurus Image Permission Form," Google Docs, https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfnGCa3AagKHuHO_oOdJvUIYO2spCzHTI_GLhULe1jK5Fn3rg/viewform?c=0&w=1&usp=embed_facebook.

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inclusion of images, whether through direct solicitation of artists for permission to include their artworks, or clarification of whether the *ABT* project offers license terms. As catalogers use the resource, terms should be sent to the *ABT* Working Group for consideration. Only through cooperative submission of terms and photos will the *ABT* continue to improve to meet the needs of institutions who utilize this resource.

Institutions should also assess their current practices surrounding fair use and determine whether the ARL and CAA codes allow for creation of new research tools as innovative developments make new projects possible. The two codes discussed in this article do not provide a legal defense for the actions taken to create the ABI. However, in aligning the project with published best practices developed by two major professional associations, the authors have taken steps to provide the best case for a fair use of copyrighted materials in this project. Using examples from other institutions, creating a detailed plan for aligning with fair use, and following best practices can all be used to make an online project viable within one's institutional context.

FINAL THOUGHTS

While the ABI at the University of Louisville will never be perfect, it now has the potential to give students and librarians far greater access to the Artists' Books Collection. In comparing this new point of contact to the previous, limited opportunities for viewing the collection, the authors believe that the ABI will provide patrons with more freedom to browse based on their interests. From June 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, the Libguide preceding this project was viewed 509 times. In comparison, ABI entries were viewed 3,134 times between July 1, 2016 and July 31, 2017. The difference represents a significant increase in collection exposure, indicating the promise the new tool has for connecting users with a previously hidden collection. This increase also highlights the importance of the relationship between artists' books and readers indicated in Athanasiu's "network of belonging" diagram.[55] Other initiatives continue the readers/library and library/artists' books relationships, but this access point is one opportunity for users to form their own relationships with books before entering the library space to experience the book in person.

The organization of metadata and the site's interface around the three categories of book styles, materials, and techniques enhances a searcher's ability to browse and discover. Moreover, the use of the *ABT*'s specialized metadata creates the tags searchers need to facilitate exploration. Through the use of an online platform, this freedom is accomplished without compromising the security of the items. Rather than focus on perfecting each record, the authors approached the project with students' information-seeking habits in mind. In this way, the goal is to help students find what they want, rather than constructing impeccable metadata.[56] Students and researchers may now move seamlessly from record to record through many avenues to explore an artist's

55. Athanasiu, "Belonging," 333.

56. Whittaker, "Get It, Catalog It, Promote It," 123.

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body of works in the collection, compare books with similar attributes, cull a list of books printed with the same techniques, and understand the myriad uses of materials in these works. While its development is ongoing, this project is a large step in the direction of providing access to researchers interested in this unique medium of art and bookmaking.

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