

Digital Future for Cultural Heritage Organizations or It's the End of the World as We Know It and I Feel Fine

By Nigel Long.

Accompanied by REM's *It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)*, Roy Tennant opened his session looking at the importance of web scale for libraries, archives and museums. Tennant is Senior Program Officer with the Research Division of OCLC, the not-for-profit library cooperative.

He briefly looked at OCLC's WorldCat.org. Providing disclosure at the network level needs to be complemented with efficiencies in metadata provision. Tennant argued for the metadata silos created for acquisitions, discovery and business intelligence by publishers, libraries, wholesalers, data aggregators and retailers to be broken down through the remaking of the cataloguing infrastructure. He quoted Alan Danskin of the British Library, "The future of cataloguing depends on transforming the process from a craft into an industry".

Instead of spending seventy per cent of our time building, maintaining and worrying about our infrastructure and thirty percent of our time on our core business as library, archives and museum workers we should adopt web scale workflow and use infrastructure at the network level to refocus on core business. Andrew Pace and others at OCLC are looking at web scale infrastructure to enable basic functionality for libraries, archives and museums using common service architecture to reduce the costs of ownership.

Tennant said that the Google search resulting in no library data is "an epic failure". The common illusion is that the world's knowledge is on the web. Materials in libraries, museums and archives that are not digitized risk being lost to the majority of potential users. He urged us to do whatever it takes to have material digitized and available online and to expose it where people congregate on the web. He suggested spending little time on portals but that specific object display "needs to rock". Capturing signposts to archives digitally and devoting more time to digitizing

individual objects as demand increases is suggested. To illustrate the effect of web scale, he cited the example of two small Library of Congress collections mounted on Flickr gaining 650,000 views within the first twenty hours of being made available. Flickr is in the top 50 and Library of Congress in the top 6,000 web sites visited.



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Libraries, archives and museums are more alike different. He cited the article in *First Monday*

www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue12.3/elings/ by Mary Elings and OCLC colleague Günther Waibel that looks at the challenges of integrating digital content from libraries, archives and museums.

Our best responses are to create agile organizations, put libraries, archives and museums at the network

level with web scale, create systemic efficiencies and collaborate broadly and deeply.

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