Donated Records Partnership Project—The Collection Match

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Concept

- Web based tool
- Password Protected
- Used by cultural heritage professionals to find or place collections
Goals

• Growing Collections

• Maintaining Mission Focus

• Cultivating Donor Relations

• Professional Collaboration
How is this different ..?

- From ArchivesGrid, SAA and other list serves?
  - ArchivesGrid is public facing, researcher oriented, and does not identify an active collecting focus.
  - SAA list of primary source repositories can be outdated.
  - Listserves to not produce a targeted, personal mailing, and can raise privacy concerns.
Who Should be Involved?

- Archivists
- Librarians
- Museum Professionals
- Stewards of culture and history!
Common Challenges

- What to do with donation offers that do not fulfill institution mission?
- How to break the news to the donor making offer?
- How to grow collections that are mission focused?
Determining Placement

- Historically significant records in private hands should be preserved and accessed from the most appropriate placement.
- Placement consideration may include:
  - Collection focus
  - Resources
  - Institution Size
  - Collection Size
  - Record types
Wouldn’t it be great if...

- a resource existed to help identify institutions that are actively collecting or open to new donations?

- a resource existed capturing elements of the placement criteria?

- we could say ...
DON’T REJECT, REDIRECT!
• Don’t Reject – Redirect
  ◦ Collecting policy which is simultaneously broad and very narrow
    ◦ Better for donor relations and PR to redirect
    ◦ To a novice, this can be challenging
    ◦ Unsolicited donation
    ◦ Returned to donor with recommendations and contact information
The Tito Puente Legacy Project at Hostos

- Assessment conducted: recommendation not to accept collection
  - Recommendation to be housed at Raices Museum in Manhattan
  - Hostos President’s office overruled recommendation
  - U.S. Congressman involved/Federal grant written
  - Collection and display installed in Hostos Library and Archives over objections of archivist and chief librarian
  - Many promised items never delivered
Beth S. Harris, Hollins University (Roanoke, VA)

- Have a policy
- Know your donor
- Respond positively
- Gently reject if you cannot . . .
- Redirect
Laura M. Poll, Monmouth County Historical Association, Freehold, NJ

- Morris Deed, 8 May 1790, Middletown Township
- Donor from Washington State, descendant of family "... for the love and good will as well as for the sum of Ten shillings ..."
- Donor frustrated after calling several repositories, both large and small
- New-York Historical Society referred donor to MCHA
- Collaborative effort = great collection for MCHA
Proposal

- Collaborate with collecting institutions & professional organizations
- Leverage expertise and resources in the profession
- Establish a multi-institutional working group to develop a pilot
- Rollout pilot for interested participants.
- Conduct analysis, make adjustments and policy decisions as needed.
- Gradually expand resource
Proposed Product & Goals

- A robust web resource that will help:
  - Grow Collections
  - Maintain Mission Focus
  - Cultivate Donor Relations
  - Cultivate Professional Collaboration
Preliminary Research: Survey Results as of 4/14/2014, Based on 111 Responses

- 64% of respondents would use web page to develop/grow collection based on collection policy; 36% would not

- 89% will use web page to find other homes for collections that don’t meet collection development guidelines; 11% would not

- 75% said redirecting collections is most important functionality for web page to have. 41% wanted to locate similar or other resources followed by 32% who will use the resource to build professional relationships

- 86% have not heard of a similar web resource anywhere else
Resources Needed

- We need YOU!!
- Support from professional organizations
- Participation by professional institutions
- People
  - IT Knowledge
  - Policy Knowledge
  - Marketing Knowledge
- Server Space
- Time
Benefits

- By working together, redirecting rather than rejecting, we build:
  - Professional relationships
  - Strong customer service reputations
  - Trust with the public
  - Collections
Interested? Have Questions?

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