

Midwest Archives Conference 2011 Annual Meeting

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I was able, with the generous support from the LIBRAS continuing education grant, able to attend the 2011 Annual Meeting for the Midwest Archives Conference, the largest regional archival association with nearly 350 registrants for this meeting. The conference is always well-planned, presented and attended, which means that the value is significant. I was able to attend the first-ever meeting of the Archon Users Group, which provided an opportunity for users of the archival management system, Archon, to talk with each other and prospective users. I was also able to attend the following sessions:

Reaching Virtually Everyone—Virtually

In this session presenters discussed their experiences with using Facebook, Twitter, and blogs for outreach. Though using all of these technologies I learned how to better incorporate them into our outreach efforts.

Streams in the E-Record Workflow: Developing Elements of the Archival Process for Electronic Records of Historical Value

I walked into this session with trepidation and dread regarding electronic records. After hearing the speakers address simple and practical ways to appraise, accession, arrange and describe, catalog archival electronic records I felt that I had a strategy to move forward. Speakers from large universities were also willing to show their own limitations and shortcomings, which helped someone from a smaller college feel better about what is being done.

Using What Works: Practical Approaches to Born-Digital Archives

Building upon the prior session the speakers at this session provided additional practical ways to balance professional best practices with the ever-growing area of digital records. In the end digital archival records must be treated the same as paper-based records.

Wisconsin Oral History Projects in the Making

This session was a bit of a disappointment as I had hoped to gain some strategies for implementing an oral history program, but this session spent more time on specifics to their program that could not be easily generalized.

Faculty-Archivist Collaborations: Promoting Archival Use

As a part of a library that seeks to engage the college's curriculum and teaching I wanted to get a sense of how to expand the use of the college's archive in courses. This was a helpful session on increasing collaboration.

Bringing History to Life: Teaching with Primary Sources

Building somewhat upon the previous session I was able to leave with a few ideas on how to create learning activities for a variety of courses. Though directed to more primary and secondary students some of the examples could be transferred to the college level.

The Midwest Archives Conference has consistently provided solid and direct benefits to its members and conference attendees. This has proved true in my experience at the 2011 conference. I will seek to provide a session for the LIBRAS Archives SIG on electronic records as it was one of the concerns raised at a recent planning meeting.

Thank you to the LIBRAS leadership and member schools for providing the additional support needed to make this trip possible. I know that it will bear fruit in my institution and I hope within LIBRAS.