Nobody Knows You're a Dog (or Library, or Museum, or Archive) on the Internet:
The Convergence of Three Cultures

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I.   Introduction:

Greetings friends and colleagues! I am delighted to be here in Glasgow to share my thoughts with you regarding collaborations on digital projects   The title of my talk this afternoon is "Nobody Knows You're a Dog (or Library, or Museum, or Archive) on the Internet: The Convergence of Three Cultures." I hope what I have to say to you will stimulate reflection, perhaps provoke controversy, and lead to a dialogue that will continue throughout the conference. First, I would like to muse about the three cultures to which my title alludes. Then I will share with you the findings of a survey to investigate technology use and digitization activities in libraries and museums. Finally, I will share with you some important examples of library/museum/archive collaborations in the United States and draw some conclusions regarding how one should approach collaborative projects. Please do keep in mind that I speak from an American perspective, and what I say may not always apply outside the United States.

II.   The Three Cultures:

Let me begin by examining the three distinct cultures of libraries, museums, and archives. My title refers to a famous cartoon (at least famous to those of us from the states) that appeared shortly after the Internet began to take hold of the American mind. I wish I could remember when I first saw the cartoon and where it first appeared, but I cannot. How many of you saw it or remember the expression? I can say at least that it appeared in the early days when we still spoke of the Internet as the "information

highway." The cartoon showed two dogs, one was seated at a personal computer. The dog seated at the computer was actively participating in some online activity. While doing so, this dog says to the other dog, "Nobody knows you're a dog on the Internet." I propose to you that this is now the same for libraries, museums, and archives. In the digital world, the distinctions between libraries, museums, and archives go away. Distinctions between these three kinds of institutions disappear because those using the Internet are only looking for information. They do not care where they find it. They do not care what institution has provided it. All three types of institutions are trusted information givers. Often all three types of institutions provide images on the Internet. To the Internet user the distinct characteristics of the source often blur. All that is important is the information or images being delivered digitally. Internet users are often new users of digital information, and they do not care where the actual material resides. They don't care about original format. They make no distinction between "document" and "object." In fact an animal depicted on a zoological museum web site becomes the same as a digitized page of a book or a scanned image of a painting to a less sophisticated searcher.

As a consequence of this behavior on the Internet and the new technological environment, the boundaries between libraries, museums, and archives seem to be going away. In the past libraries provided documents (both multiples and unique items) to users or readers for education, research, and recreation. Museums provided objects or artifacts to an audience of visitors also for education and recreation. Archives provided documents of a specific kind to researchers. Now, all three are providing new documents, that is, surrogates, to Web users. Special collections departments in libraries have been digitizing collections, including books, manuscripts, photographs, and maps. Museums have been implementing collection management systems that include digital image surrogates that they then make available on the web. Archives have been using EAD to produce finding aids for online access and linking surrogates of the actual archival material to the finding aids. Searching across bibliographic records, museum collection management system records, and EAD records is finally a reality. Many anticipate a convergence of values and practice. After all, libraries, museums, and archives are all "learning cultures". They are all educational and cultural institutions. They all preserve our heritage. Libraries and museums have a broad user base, and traditionally in the United States, they are democratic institutions. All three provide resources for life long learning and give access to knowledge. They are centers for research and scholarship, and they facilitate inquiry based on learning. Furthermore, they are supportive of families learning together.

Yet, there are serious institutional cultural differences between libraries, museums, and archives that must be taken into account in order to insure success when collaborative digital programs are planned. I am reminded of a line or two from Michel de Montaigne's essay "On the Custom of Wearing Clothes." Montaigne was a 16th century French thinker who managed to anticipate many of the ideas of modernity. In "Wearing Clothes" he says, "Wherever I wish to turn, I have to break through some barrier of custom, so carefully has custom blocked all our approaches." What are the "barriers of custom" that make collaborating difficult for libraries, museums, and archives? They are nothing more than the cultural differences to which I have just alluded.

At least four "barriers of custom" came to mind when I was preparing this paper. They are 1) professional education/preparation; 2) legal issues such as fair use (a very American concept) and privacy; 3) collection development, and its corollary, selection for the Web; and 4) access provided by metadata.

As we know, especially in the United States, education at the master's degree level in library or information science is more or less a must for holding a professional position in a library. We say it is a "union card." Along with this credential comes induction into a very specific culture that uplifts and actively promotes ethical behavior and professionalism; the rights of individuals, including the freedom to read anything and not to be censored in gathering information; and literacy for all. This means that young American librarians enter the profession with a background common not only to their peers from library

school but common to those who may have been in the profession for many years. There is no such common education and training for museum professionals and little for archivists. The master's degree and/or doctoral degree in a discipline are perhaps the most common educational paths for those holding curatorial and administrative positions in museums. Few have received master's degrees in programs of museum administration. Furthermore, such degree programs seem to have little impact on the field. Archivists tend to have degrees in history and/or degrees in library and information science. Some have certificates in archives administration from credentialing programs, usually associated with university history departments. For museum administrators especially, and at some level for archivists, there is little in their educational preparation that is held in common with peers in like positions. All of this means that when librarians work with museum professionals and archivists on collaborative projects, they must not assume a common understanding regarding such matters as legal issues, collection development, and access.

The concept of fair use of library material under copyright is an example. Under this concept, American librarians are accustomed to allowing patrons to make photocopies of copyrighted materials in their collections for personal use only. Museum professionals are not. (How many times have you seen signs in museums indicating that photography is allowed?) Fair use is an important underlying principle in the development of any digital image database given the way that digital data must be copied repeatedly to be served up and given the ease with which an Internet surfer can copy and download files. When planning a collaborative project with museum colleagues be sure to discuss how fair use and copyright impact on your particular project and come to a common understanding. In Europe, the issue of Public Lending Rights may need to be addressed.

Another example is collection development and selection for the Web. Academic and research libraries develop broad collections in depth. That is what is needed to carry out research. Museum collections may have breadth but often lack depth. Museums expect to exhibit their collections to an audience in order to demonstrate an artist's style, a type of artifact, a sort of animal, etc., etc. Archives will have tremendous depth but may have no breadth at all if they are the archives of a single individual or institution. It is far more reasonable for a museum to expect to digitize all the objects in its collection than for a library or archive to ever do the same. This difference may lead to difficult discussions when planning a collaborative project. A library or an archive must develop criteria for selecting material for digitization. A museum may be able to skip this.

Until recently, another serious barrier to collaboration was metadata. Early in the development of technology, libraries developed the MARC format, more recently followed by the Dublin Core, to capture the bibliographic information used to distinguish one book or periodical from another in online catalogs. Archivists followed by developing EAD, or encoded archival description, to mark up archival finding aids for the Web. Museums have been much slower to develop such tools and standards. The recent introduction of collection management systems in the museum environment is finally addressing the need to automate museum collections information. Unfortunately, this history has led to the development of three different standards and best practices (one for libraries, one for museums, and one for archives) that must be reconciled in any collaborative project.

Taking cultural differences into account, I believe it is safe to say that collaborations between libraries and archives can be relatively straight forward as the problems faced by each are nearly the same. Collaborations between libraries, archives, and museums are likely to be more problematic and should be pursued with great care.

III.   IMLS Survey:
The findings of a "first-ever survey of technology use and digitization activities in [American] libraries and museums"[1] carried out by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) were

announced in June. (IMLS is an independent Federal agency of the United States Government created by the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996 to administer the Library Services and Technology Act and the Museum Services Act.) The survey findings shed light on how libraries and museums have implemented technology. More than 700 libraries and museums were asked about their technology use and their digitization activities. Museums, public libraries, academic libraries, and State Library Administrative Agencies all participated in the data collection. Here is what was found:

- 87% of museums and 99% of libraries use some technology, including desktop computers, Internet access, email, standard office software, Web sites, and computerized collection catalogs;
- Technology use is strong in medium and large museums but lags significantly in the smaller museums;
- Museums have fewer sources of funds for technology; 20% of responding museums have no funding for technology;
- 78% of State Library Administrative Agencies reported digitization activities in the past year;
- 32% of museums, 34% of academic libraries, and 25% of public libraries reported digitizing materials.

I think it is safe to conclude that American libraries are ahead of American museums in the use of technology. Furthermore, while four of five of all state libraries have moved ahead with digital projects, only large libraries and museums have done so. IMLS will use the survey findings to encourage best practices in digitization activities including policy development, use of digital registries, and collaboration.[2] In fact, Dr. Robert Martin, Director of IMLS, stated publicly in March that although we have lots of "digital stuff," we still need to create a "digital library" that reflects coherent selection and organization.[3]

In 2000, the IMLS awarded over $3 million in National Leadership Grants for Libraries for such library-museum collaborative projects as the development of multimedia Web-based exhibits, shared access to digitized resources, and links between museum and library Web sites.[4] IMLS will continue to contribute to that endeavor by providing some seed money for future collaborations. It is important to note that IMLS can fund the U.S. side of international projects. In the past, IMLS has funded collaborations between branches of public libraries physically located in museums as well as university, museum, and kindergarten through grade 12 school collaborations. IMLS is encouraging both collaborations online and physical collaborations.

To obtain a free copy of the 42-page report, *The Status of Technology and Digitization in the Nation's Museums and Libraries*, email IMLS at imlsinfo@imls.gov or access it electronically from the agency Web site: http://www.imls.gov/Reports/TechReports/intro02.htm.[5]

IV.   Other Collaborations:
It is now my aim to tell you about two other major collaborative projects in the states involving the three cultures of which I have spoken. They are Cultural Materials sponsored by the Research Libraries Group (RLG) and ArtSTOR sponsored by the Mellon Foundation. While both of these projects are sponsored by not for profit organizations, both have or will result in subscription services available to educational institutions. I will end by describing the one educational program I know of for facilitating collaborative projects.

I must say at the outset that I am a member of the Research Libraries Group (RLG) Board of Directors. I was elected in 2001, and I currently have served one year of a three-year term. Therefore, what I have to say next may be somewhat biased. In a January 2000 press release, RLG announced that it had made "electronic access to cultural materials a priority in the opening years of the 21st century."[6] This

press release went on to say that "in a collaborative, international effort, [RLG] will be creating shared access to high-quality images – plus descriptions – of the works and artifacts that document culture and civilization. The result will be a globally accessible, Web-based research resource drawn from pre-eminent collections in RLG member institutions."[6] Since RLG members are from the international community and number libraries, museums, and archives, this resource is necessarily a collaboration of all three. January 2002 marked the time when institutions could begin to subscribe to RLG Cultural Materials. The database now contains 121,000 "digitized photographs, artifacts, works of art, rare publications, video, audio, letters, music, and more from preeminent [institutions]… [It] integrates 46 collections from 22 institutions for users to explore, choose from, compare, and use. A flexible Web browser workspace developed for these materials makes this easy."[7]

As an aside, let me say that institutions such as the American Antiquarian Society in Worchester, Massachusetts, and the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, have found RLG Cultural Materials to be an attractive way to get their "stuff" on the Web. Not wanting to dedicate resources to provide digitized materials on their own Web sites, RLG Cultural Materials provides a collaborative alternative that works for institutions like these two independent research libraries. The irony is that while materials from small institutions are available through the RLG venue, sometimes the owning institution is not able to subscribe to the service to bring its own "stuff" home.

ArtSTOR is a digital resource currently in development by the Mellon Foundation. Mellon has recruited the head of the arts libraries from Yale University and the head of information services from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts to head up the project, so clearly their product will be collaborative and contain resources from both academic institutions and museums. Databases created by support from previous Mellon grants such as the images of cave paintings in Dunhuang, China are likely to be included as well as a comprehensive database of images or an image "gallery" for teaching undergraduate art history. Like RLG Cultural Materials, what is produced as ArtSTOR will be only available by subscription. "In working with content providers, the Foundation and ArtSTOR have obtained perpetual, non-exclusive rights to aggregate such materials and distribute them electronically for educational and scholarly purposes."[8]

The two programs that I have just described involve very large organizations with resources to take on comprehensive projects. How do smaller institutions learn to carryout digital projects, collaborative or not? One program I am aware of to address this question is sponsored by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and my own institution, the Getty Research Institute. It is called "Museums, Libraries, and Archives: Summer Institute for Knowledge Sharing." The Summer Institute has met four times since 1999 to educate library, archive, and museum professionals in how to go about collaborative digital projects. It has been the brainchild of Michele Cloonan of UCLA (and soon to be dean of the library school at Simmons College, Boston), consultant, Cynthia Scott, and Murtha Baca who is head of the Standards and Vocabularies program at the Getty Research Institute. The curriculum this summer included sessions on re-engineering for 21st – century collections, fund raising for digital projects, criteria for selecting materials for digitization, metadata issues, how to collaborate, project planning and management, workflow, and long term preservation of digital resources.

V.   Conclusions:
In conclusion, let me summarize: If libraries, museums, and archives are to enter into successful, collaborative digitization projects they must always be mindful of the three distinct cultures from which they come. Furthermore, they must be aware of differences in levels of technology implementation from one culture to another. The recently reported IMLS survey provides evidence of differences in technical expertise to be found in libraries and museums for those pursuing joint projects. Learning more about large collaboratives such as RLG Cultural Materials and ArtSTOR should provide guidance as well.

Finally, let me suggest my seven point program to successful "cross-cultural" projects:
1. Proceed with caution;
2. To avoid surprises, be mindful of cultural differences;
3. At the outset, be sure common goals are present across all participating institutions;
4. Communicate, communciate, communicate!!
5. Allow adequate time for planning;
6. Agree to standards early on;
7. Don't forget the need to preserve the digital product you create.
8.
Always keep these seven points in mind as you enter into a collaborative project that crosses cultures. And, Good Luck!!!!!

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[1] IMLS Web site, 7-15-02.
[2] IMLS Web site, 7-15-02.
[3] Talk given by Dr. Robert Martin, Director of IMLS, at the OCLC Director's Conference, Dublin, Ohio, March 4, 2002.
[4] IMLS Web site, "All About Grants and Awards," 6-8-01.
[5] IMLS Web site, 7-15-02.
[6] RLG News Release, 1/2000: "Improving Access to Cultural Materials," Mountain View, CA, 7 January 2000, p.1.

[7] RLG News Release, 5/2002: "ALA 2002: What to Look for from RLG," Mountain View, CA, May 10, 2002, p.2.
[8] The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, "Recent Announcements, New York, NY, April 5, 2001, p.3.