



I would like to start this conference recap by thanking the ARLIS/NA Northwest Chapter for their support of my conference attendance. As I stated in my application for the travel award, I would not have been able to attend without this help. I am very grateful.

I always look forward to the ARLIS/NA Annual Conference. I am always assured of learning something that I can directly implement in my own work, making important connections with colleagues and feeling professionally refreshed. This conference offered nothing less.

Thursday

My trip started out nicely. All of my flights were on time. I ran into a Seattle friend in the airport at Chicago, we had lunch and called our husbands to tell them both to meet up over the weekend since both were on "Mister Mom" duty with our prospective kids. When I arrived in Boston, my bag was the third to come out on the belt (I believe I waited for my bag approximately 2 minutes - a new world record!), I bought my Charlie Pass (as instructed by the very helpful information desk attendant), stepped out to the curb, met my Silver Line bus and was taken to the hotel. This was one of the most pleasant traveling experiences I've had. We're off to a good start.

I met a very good friend of mine at Harvard and we ate a great dinner at [Grafton Street](#). I will say, hands down, that I had the best chick pea burger I've ever tasted.

Friday



On Friday, my day began early with the tour of the [Mt. Auburn Cemetery](#). I love cemeteries. They are such fascinating markers of our history (no pun intended). I remembered the incredible experience I had during the ARLIS Conference in Denver in 2008 when Annette Stott gave us a tour of two historic Denver cemeteries. I had high hopes for this tour as well. It didn't disappoint.

Our tour guide was Jim, a long-time volunteer docent for Mt. Auburn. I was awestruck by the immense beauty of the cemetery. In addition to its primary function, it is also a reknown arboretum with lush ponds and small lakes. It's also a harbor for bird watchers. It is the spot of the highest concentration and most varied species of bird in the Boston area. While we were looking at a monument, a hawk swooped down and landed. It was amazing.

I've loaded my pictures on [Flickr](#).

I knew I was with "my people" when Jim told us about a program they used in the funerary industry called "Plot Finder." This is a database that allows cemetery staff to be able to look up individuals and show exactly where their monument or burial plot is. I don't think Jim expected us all to be so excited about a burial database. I immediately looked into this product when I got back to the room. Here's [a little more](#) about it. Unfortunately, it looks like the vendor who developed it, stopped in 2007. So, others have gone on to create alternatives: [Legacy Mark](#) and another by [NewCom Technologies, Inc.](#) Interesting.

In the afternoon, I attended a workshop called "Meeting User Expectations: Strategies for Supporting New

Technologies in the Arts Library" at MassArt. In short, we learned about two emerging tools: [Google Wave](#) (a more robust sort of IM technology) and something I am incredibly excited about: [Jing](#). Jing is a free software where you can record computer visuals and voice and send to someone as a link. The example the workshop leader used was a response to a student query on finding bibliographic information on a particular architect. The student sent her an email inquiry and rather than respond back with a lengthy email, she recorded her steps in accessing the correct database, making certain field choices and sorting the results along with her directions during the process. She saved it and sent the student a link with this recording. We talked about how you could use this to record the directions to frequently-asked questions like "how do I search the catalog?" I am definitely going to be trying this at my library.

That evening I enjoyed the convocation and party afterward. It's always great to meet people I speak with on the phone or email with often face to face. It's great to see colleagues I have formed friendships with and catch up. And the food was delicious!

Saturday

The next day included the session "Confronting the Future: Articulating Purpose, Documenting Value." Many of you who know me, know I have felt my position has been on and off the "chopping block" for the past two years or so. The financial situation is still bleak and who knows what lies ahead. It was some what of a relief (if that's the proper term) to see that everyone is in the same boat - large libraries and small have all laid off staff, cut back, combined jobs and slashed resources. I felt some hope learning about tools I could use to help keep the library staffed and running. In particular, the many "non-monetary" approaches to defining value that Jeanne Brown (UNLV Library) shared with us really got me thinking. Those strategies will definitely be part of any sort of value statement I put forth to my institution.

Next, I met members of the Northwest Chapter in the hotel lobby for an informal chapter chat. You can read the minutes here [[link soon](#)]. I have to say, this is a great group and I am very proud to be a part of it.



That afternoon I visited the [Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum](#). I had never been before and was entranced. My area in art history was Venetian Renaissance art, so you can imagine my joy to be standing in front of Titian's great [Europa](#). I nearly cried. It's such a quirky museum. I really enjoyed that.

Just after the museum visit, I headed back to the World Trade Center for the Artist Files Special Interest Group meeting. This group has been extremely helpful to my better organizing, cataloging and promoting my library's artist files. You might have seen the recent announcement that two important resources, the [Artist Files Revealed: Online Directory](#) and [Artist Files Revealed: Documentation and Access](#) are now available on the ARLIS/NA web site. These are real milestones. I hope to become more involved in this group in the next year.

I spent a little time in the exhibitors' hall. I spoke with Allison from AskArt.com. We have a great relationship and use AskArt extensively for research. I also spoke with the JSTOR folks about the [Auction Catalogs project](#). If they can get this online resource for auction catalog information to be comprehensive enough, I could literally gain back hundreds of feet in my stacks and off-site storage. Oh the possibilities!!

Following this, I attended the session "The New Deal: Reforming The Discrete Practices of Libraries, Archives and Museums." One of the presenters was not able to make it from Germany due to the aftermath of the Iceland volcano. The other presenter was Douglas Dodd from the Victoria & Albert Museum. He discussed the collaboration that resulted in the amazing [V&A Collections Site](#). It's really a model of perfection in terms of collaboration and the services it provides. You can even order a print of what you see.

Later that evening I attended a "vegetarian librarian's dinner" at [Myers + Chang](#) in the South End. Arranged by a

colleague from Georgetown University, it was another opportunity to meet and converse with librarians I might never run into at the conference. It was delicious and a fun evening. Several students were part of the group and it was interesting to hear their perspectives on the current job hunting situation (i.e. lack of jobs).

Sunday

Sunday was another busy day. In the morning I attended the session "The Art of Books From the Real to the Virtual: The Artistic, Cultural, and Historical Significance of American Decorated Publishers' Bindings." In the fall, I plan to mount an exhibition of my library's decorated publishers' bindings. I was really excited about this session and it didn't disappoint. Jessica Lacher-Feldman from the University of Alabama, joined us via Skype and the presentation was very successful. She demonstrated [PBO: Publisher's Bindings Online](#). I absolutely *love* this stuff! I'm sure I gasped several times during the presentation. Richard Minsky, founder of the Center for the Book Arts in New York, also discussed publishers' bindings in his own collection and showed us a low-cost process done currently in China that allows gold and other types of finishes to be applied to book covers once again. Perhaps this manufacturer-level artform might take hold once more? Jessica's presentation especially made me think more critically about my own collection of bindings.

The next session I attended was called "Teaching Art Research: Two Collaborative Instruction Models." In this presentation, Ellen Petraits from RISD described a technique called "concept mapping." It reminded me to some degree of the way my MLIS professors would have us map out systems before building a database. My main group of users does not include students, but this was all interesting to think about nonetheless.



After this, I spent the afternoon with my very good friend who is due to give birth in two weeks. I was very fortunate in that her friends arranged her baby shower so that I could attend. It was a great afternoon. I was sorry to miss the general meeting, but promise - really - to read the minutes in the conference proceedings.

Monday

My last day in Boston. I missed my daughter and my husband. I missed my bed. But, I could have stayed longer. It was a truly great conference. This final day was especially valuable.

First, I attended the ARTstor User Group. We *love* ARTstor at SAM. Our staff love it, our teaching artists love it and the educators that visit the lending library love it and use it a lot. It's always great to hear about what they're up to. It was exciting and gratifying to see the Seattle Art Museum's collection mentioned as one of the new collections coming on line. I know a lot of work has been done on our end by people in our Registrar's Office. It's very exciting and people are waiting anxiously for this. It was also great to hear about [Shared Shelf](#), a new system they are developing to help (mainly academic libraries) manage images.

Lastly, I attended the Museum Libraries Division Meeting. This was a great way to end the conference. We discussed the findings from the preliminary Museum Libraries Survey. There was some discussion about some better ways to gather the data and ways to get a better response rate, but it was a major first step. I learned about a company called UPrinting that has provided several museum libraries with quality simple brochures at a reasonable costs. Promoting the libraries was a continued theme throughout the conference in the sessions I attended. It was great to see so many others who do exactly what I do and hear from them. It was great to rekindle friendships and vow to speak

more often.

Final Thoughts

As expected, I felt completely refreshed and completely invested in my professional career as an art librarian. I was reminded over and over again during the conference that this was where I belonged. I look forward to using many of the tools, strategies and technologies I've learned in the past days to continue to build a better library and be a better librarian.

Thank you Northwest Chapter!