I am very grateful to ARLIS/SE Chapter committee for the Professional Development Travel Award that allowed me to attend the 40th ARLIS/NA Conference that took place in Toronto, Ontario, from March 29th to April 2nd.

As a “first timer,” (proudly shown in the pink ribbon beneath my name tag) I processed all my new experiences through the lens of curiosity and discovery. This is a selection of the most relevant passages from my conference journey.

**Workshop: Digital Preservation & Web Archiving: Virtual Artist’s Files**

The [Internet Archive](http://archive.org)'s main purpose is to prevent the Internet and other "born-digital" materials from disappearing into the past. According to the speakers the average lifespan of a webpage is 44 days, dropping down from 100 days, a few years ago. Many materials traditionally distributed in a hard copy format are available solely as digital media/online content today. One of the most interesting examples shown was the 3D poetry archived at [Electronic Literature Organization](http://electronicliterature.org).

A brief hands-on session on archiving a demo site allowed participants to better understand the management and functionality of the [Archive-It](http://archive.it) application in a working environment. Internet Archive is a still a tool under development with a lot of potential. It is a viable option to face the challenge of changing the content of the Internet from ephemera to enduring artifacts. This workshop definitely raised the awareness of preserving the fast changing web environment.

**Meeting: ARLIS/SE Chapter**

I was introduced to the group by Hillary Veeder, previous travel award winner, who also invited me to serve on the Travel Award Committee to select the 2013 recipient. I am especially thankful to SE president Lee Eltzroth whose quick responses to all my questions prior the conference were very helpful in making all the necessary arrangements for the trip.

**Reports:**

- Approval of the minutes from 2011.
- Treasurer’s report update up to March 2012.
- The Strategic Plan from 2011 available on ARLIS/NA website.
- Lo Presti Award update of the status of the next award selection

**Prospective projects:**

- ARLIS-VRA financial model for a joint conference.
- Joint meeting with another chapter or to join the Special Library Association for a meeting and/or reception event.
- Virtual conference.  
  - Advantages: flexible locations and hours, archiving for further review.
  - Challenges: the required technology and its associated costs.
- Informal mentoring program for improving librarian skills and expertise
Technicalities:
- ARTifacts will be sent via e-mail only. Accepted for better dissemination, low cost and environmentally friendly option.
- Kathy Edwards was appointed as the new co-webmaster to collaborate with website updates.

SE Chapter, counting current and life members is over 50 members for the first time. This growth is a great indicator of the success of the chapter’s work. Next SE chapter annual meeting will take place at Georgia Center from 11/8/2012 to 11/9/2012.

Sessions:
Digital Humanities, the changing book, and the new librarianship

Main topics discussed
- Scholarly work in digital form forces scholars to engage with a variety of people – librarians and technologists in particular
- Curation is today a shared responsibility between librarians and scholars.
- Each digitization project is unique and should be engaged in collaborative project.

Examples of projects
- The Zeega project, a collaborative project under of the Harvard Library Lab
- The SAHARA Model of Digital Humanities from The Society of Architectural Historians, working in partnership with ARTstor.

Metadata: the changing information landscape

Image cataloging in multidisciplinary collections
- Metadata schema should be subject related. Fairly new metadata schemas such as Darwin Core (DwC) and Astronomy Visualization Metadata (AVM) are good examples of that.
- The metadata schemas should be flexible for interoperability and migration
- The accessibility and privacy have to be managed based on the subject too. Some images require a sequential order while other, like medical records should be private.

Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) and Resource Description and Access (RDA)
- RDA is designed to be used primarily on libraries; the transition will be slower in museums and archives due to the large variety of information packages held by them.
- Challenge: pre-existing records in the databases do not have the relationship designators needed for RDA. It will require re-cataloging at some extent.
- Advantages: improve subject access points, authority records and interoperability

Linked Open Data and the Semantic Web
- Objective: to create links between data, relationships and properties (instead of pages)
- RDF is a powerful tool that allows mixing and matching data sets
- RDA is the ontology needed to build the semantic web element set
- Linked Open Data example: Pan-Canadian Documentary Heritage Network
The Semantic Web is for me the most fascinating topic in information science today. It envisions information readily interpreted by machines. There is a lot of potential in this conceptual model and the library field will be one of the extensively benefited from any progress in this matter.

**Snapshot: A Look at Today's Photo Archives (3 projects)**

- [The Black Star Collection at Ryerson University](#)
- Frick's Photoarchive Collection migration into [Arcade](#)
- [The Artamonoff Business](#) from the Image Collections & Fieldwork Archives (ICFA)

Main considerations:
- Open source software like Omeka are solutions for low budget and/or high customization
- Collections should “go out” the institution for increase accessibility, some options are: Artstor, Worldcat and Google
- Migrations are challenging processes that occurs smoother with flexible schemas.

**Exhibits**

One of the most interesting vendors I found was Book2Net Inc. We discussed the latest in book scanning technology that they have designed in collaboration with the British Library. The Spirit and Kiosk do not require paper, toner or maintenance. It delivers images to patrons in a digital format. Also, many libraries are using them for the digitization of rare books and artifacts; which is the interest of my department. However, this high level technology is very expensive and institutions have to balance the benefits with the cost of the equipment.

**Social:**

**First Time Attendee**

Through the Conference Networking program I met my mentor Rebecca Price, who is the Architecture, Urban Planning & Visual Resources Librarian Art, Architecture & Engineering Library from University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She was an excellent guide and advisor that helped me to select the meetings, sessions and events that best fitted my interests. She also introduced me to many members of the association I would be unable to meet otherwise. Through her I knew about the Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources and Image Management, an annual joint program of ARLIS/NA and VRA specially designed for image management and metadata. I am definitely looking to participate.

**Plenary Speaker and Welcome Party**

I didn’t know about [Diana Thorneycroft](#) before the conference. Her photographs are permeated by a dark, even disturbing aesthetic. Diana’s artwork does not mean to please but to shock and confront the audience. Her subversive photographs deal with universal questions of cultural identity, female roles, and historical problematical issues from a very intimate, unique perspective. It is always very rewarding to be introduced to an artist’s work by the artist. Her presentation was provocative and honest, indeed remarkable.
Convocation and Convocation Reception

I had the pleasure of reuniting with my two instructors of Art Librarianship, Kenneth Soehner, Chief Librarian at the Watson Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Amy Lucker, Library Director at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, both, visiting associate professors at Pratt Institute. They were who motivated me to join ARLIS/NA. It was truly enjoyable to tour Frank Gehry’s delightfully renovated architecture of the Art Gallery of Ontario. The after hours tour allowed the participants to interact in a relaxed, informal environment.

Tour (on my own): Royal Museum of Ontario

The facade of the museum is so eye-catching that I couldn’t help but get into it after the workshop. The building design interacts with its surroundings in a chaotic yet exquisite coexistence of exuberant elements of contemporary architecture and traditional building structures. It works also from the inside-out direction where the old fashioned streetcars going back and forth on downtown can be seen through extreme angular windows.

The collection is fascinating and it’s conceived to engage audiences of all ages. Anthropological, natural, artistic and historical elements are very well arranged. It is didactic and entertaining, a great combination for learning and fun.

Conclusion and final considerations

I left the conference on Sunday April 2nd at noon with lots of fresh ideas that I started sharing and brainstorming with my coworkers the following Monday.

For future conferences I have to improve some of my logistic strategies to be able to get the most of the event. Some tips I came out for myself that might help some other beginners:

- Staying at the conference hotel really saved plenty of time and it helped to be more in touch with other participants. (I was in a hotel only four blocks from the conference hotel; however, I wasted time in my back and forth trips.)
- Getting information about how to reach the locations of the events as soon as possible helps one participate in more activities. (I planned to attend two workshops and I couldn’t make it)
- Planning ahead for the lunch-dinner breaks would prevent starvation at the end of the day (Yes, that happened a couple of times)

Overall, the conference was very informative and enjoyable. It was firsthand learning at a professional level I hadn’t experienced before. It was very stimulating to hear so many success stories from colleagues committed to preserving and sharing the cultural legacy from our collective past and present for the future generations. Once again, I want to thank the ARLIS/SE chapter for providing the means for my trip. I hope to meet you all again in the SE chapter annual meeting next November in Athens, GA.

Respectfully submitted May 1st, 2012