The Metadata Interest Group (MIG) meeting at ALA Annual 2012 featured four presentations focused on the changing role of cataloging and metadata librarians. Rebecca Lubas, presenting for herself and for her colleague Amy Jackson from the University of New Mexico, opened the session. Their organization is working to ensure that cataloging staff are full participants in the operations of the library. They work to transfer catalogers’ planning, analysis, and data creation skills to other areas, such as grant planning. Cataloging staff are actively partnering with library IT, special collections departments, and ILL.

Debra Skinner from Georgia Southern University discussed how her cataloging unit is managing change. Specific projects her department has entered into involving significant transition include discovery layers, the institutional repository and digital collections, patron driven acquisitions, offsite storage, and the print to electronic transition. They have committed to a model of ongoing staff training, embracing the idea of constant change in the future.

Anna Kraft and David Gwynn from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro described their department’s work to transfer skills from traditional cataloging to non-MARC metadata activities and to cross-train cataloging staff. UNC-Greensboro now has some dual-department positions, with individuals sharing their time between the cataloging unit and library IT, special collections, and digital projects. They have transferred skills between formats in activities such as adding LCSH to EAD, creating EAD and MARC simultaneously, and recycling MARC data for already cataloged but newly digitized materials. They reported that the biggest challenges they faced in this work were developing a shared terminology across departments, navigating different reporting structures, and a lack of physical proximity for units working together.

Pat Headlee and colleagues from Northern Arizona University presented their take on changing priorities for 21st century cataloging. Their primary lessons learned are that specialized tasks require ongoing practice, that the library as a whole must have a mutual understanding of what the priorities are so that everyone is clear why one activity gets done before another, that diverse job functions add variety to work but there is a limit to how many different types of tasks one person can effectively take on, and that aptitude for learning new processes and flexibility are the most important factors to hire for in cataloging staff.

Presentation materials from the MIG meeting can be found online at <http://connect.ala.org/node/182306>.

The session then moved to into a business meeting. The MLA liaison, Jenn Riley, reported on metadata meetings and presentations to be held at the upcoming MLA conference, and gave an update on work to
develop the music metadata clearinghouse. Maureen Walsh from Ohio State was elected MIG vice-chair, Ivey Glendon was elected program co-chair, and Jason Kovari was elected blog coordinator.

“Data Management: What is the Library's Role?” Co-sponsored by the ALCTS Metadata Interest Group, June 25, 2012, 8:00-10:00 AM

This session featured three speakers describing case studies in library data management support at their institutions. Anne Elguindi from American University described three partnerships into which their library has entered in support of data management: for storage with campus IT, a regional consortium, and a campus research center; for managing data-centric workflows with a campus research institute, and for data management plans with sponsored research and risk management. Colleen Lyon from the University of Texas also partnered across campus, with their sponsored research office and campus IT to start up a data management program. They are doing consulting and training, as well as deposit of smaller data sets into the Texas Digital Repository. She noted the planning process was significantly longer than they had anticipated, taking months rather than weeks. Maura Valentino from Oregon State University also described consulting and training services, and a drive to hire staff with data management expertise and to include these duties in several job descriptions in the library. Matt Parsons, Malyka Ianni, and Theodore Gerontakos from the University of Washington echoed the collaborative and training-focused approach described by the earlier presenters. They have put into place a data services team that will oversee their future efforts. Kevin Clair from Penn State University described his institution’s approach to data management support, with training and outreach centered in public services, and repository development, metadata standards, and authority control in technical services.

Other ALA Annual 2012 Sessions of Interest to MLA Members in the Area of Metadata

An additional list of sessions from ALA Annual 2012 of interest to metadata specialists may be found at <http://www.alcts.ala.org/metadatablog/2012/06/ala-annual-conference-2012-best-bets-for-metadata-librarians-and-call-for-bloggers/>. This blog also includes summaries for many of these sessions.