Same software, different design:
Opportunities, challenges and myths
Kari James, Executive Officer, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau
Adelaide, 23 October 2019
What is the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau?

- Established at ANU in 1968 to improve access to primary documentation about the Pacific Islands
- Make preservation copies of archives, manuscripts and rare printed materials about the Pacific Islands
- Access to these materials through our member libraries
Microfilming in the Islands
Essential requirements

• Metadata visible to everyone YES
• Deliver digital objects YES
• Ability to partition access to digital objects so they can only be opened in subscribing libraries. We are entirely funded by subscription fees, so this was essential YES – using IP authentication, member management plugin
• Interoperable with the various library systems of subscribing libraries – MARC collaboration with NLA, MARC and HTML export plugins
• Easily migrate from existing database YES
Welcome to the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau catalogue

The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau copies archives, manuscripts and rare printed material relating to the Pacific Islands. The aim of the Bureau is to help with long-term preservation of the documentary heritage of the Pacific Islands and to make it accessible.

The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau collection is the most extensive collection of non-government primary documentation on the Pacific Islands available to researchers.

The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau is a non-profit organisation sponsored by an international consortium of libraries specialising in Pacific research. Anyone with Internet access can search the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau catalogue, however only customers of member libraries can access the full text digital collections (.jgs of images and .pdfs of manuscripts) in the database.

Access to member libraries is by IP authentication. If you can not access one of these libraries in person, please contact the Bureau pambu@anu.edu.au.

The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau has a number of finding aids to assist you with your research.
Collection MS 1424 - Lihir language word dictionary translated in German and grammar notebooks
Item 02 - Niue - Burns Philp's Store. Interior of B.P.'s store Alofi. Crowd buying New Zealand sausages and frozen mussels.
AtoM in 2019 – Users/Researchers

Feedback:

• Search and Browse not intuitive for many users
• Difficulty interpreting search results: lack of visual distinction between levels of description/hierarchy
• Bugs such as blank ‘Untitled’ records
• Assistance to researchers
AtoM in 2019 – Archivists/ Administrators

• Manual uploads of digital objects causing bottlenecks
• Faulty ‘update descendants’ function
• System outage
• Over reliance on goodwill
• Online community/support highly technical
Pacific use?

• Do you have technical support in your organisation? In country?

• After installation, will you have funding for ongoing support?
AtoM wish list

For researchers:

• ‘Browse by media type’ button - photos
• Better visual distinction between levels in the hierarchy.

For me, I’d like

• Far less manual processing.
• A more active ‘real world’ user community
Thank you!

pambu@anu.edu.au

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