

Cataloging Film Posters: *Challenges and AI Solutions*

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Challenges

Determining Researcher Needs:

- *How researchers will actually use these posters and which specific features are most important to record*

Subjectivity and Specialized Knowledge:

- *Requires the cataloger to possess a significant amount of specialized knowledge*
- *Tasks like writing descriptive narrative summaries (often placed in MARC field 520) and interpreting color design or lighting are inherently subjective*

Language Barriers:

- *Face a major obstacle when trying to accurately transcribe languages they are not proficient in, such as Thai, which makes it difficult to record standard elements like cast lists, taglines, or plot summaries*

Describing Complex Physical Details:

- *Document significant details that do not fit neatly into standard physical description areas, such as identifying marks like watermarks and stamps*
- *Furthermore, detailing specific damage and condition issues is essential for preservation, institutional management, and identifying unique copies, but it demands meticulous, time-consuming documentation*

Perspectives from Researchers

A cataloging record designed to support film poster studies should include the following core elements

- *Standard Text Elements: The essential text provided by the designers, which typically includes the film's title, the names of the actors, actresses, directors, and producers, along with any quotes or taglines.*
- *Visual Content Elements: The specific imagery and graphics used to hint at the film's plot, including characters, settings, and cultural symbols.*
- *Compositional Elements: The physical layout of the poster, categorized by examining the number (**amount**), **size**, **placement**, and **direction** (orientation) of both the visual and text elements*
- *Color Design and Lighting: The specific color palettes and lighting levels used on the poster.*

DCRM(G) : Physical Condition, and Damage

- Important Physical Details: Note complex layered constructions, mixed media components, or specific photographic production histories not captured in formal physical descriptions (DCRM(G) 7B9.1, 7B9.3, 7B9.2)
- Identifying Marks and Containers: Describe watermarks, publisher ink stamps, blind stamps, and original historically significant containers (DCRM(G) 7B9.7 & 7B9.4)
- Condition and Damage: Detail the physical condition to ensure proper preservation and usage, provide transparency about the primary source's history, aid in the identification of unique physical copies based on specific defects, and support collection management policies

Film poster cataloging framework

Mapped directly to MARC Fields 500 & 520

The Framework



1. Standard
Text Elements



2. Visual Content
& Context



3. Compositional
Elements



4. Color Design
& Lighting



5. Physical
Condition &
Damage

Is AI a solution?

Can catalogers use AI to help manage complex visual and textual features and overcome these descriptive challenges?

AI result : mapping to the framework



Standard Text Elements

500 #a Text on the poster reads "IN EASTMANCOLOR; A CHINESE PICTURE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES; SHAW SB SCOPE; 邵氏影版; 邵氏綜藝體; 全部彩色".

Standard Text Elements

500 #6 880-03#a Film credits printed on poster: "何莉莉 領銜主演; 桂治洪 導演; 邵仁枚 監製; 林風, 鄭君綿, 李昆, 黃莎莉, 彭鵬, 潘愛倫, 顧文宗 聯合主演; Starring LILY HO; Director KUEI CHIH-HUNG; Producer RUNME SHAW."

Color Design and Lighting

500 #a Lighting & Color: Dominant colors are beige (#f0ead6), orange (#e88b6e), and black (#1a1a1a). Brightness level is high.

Identifying Marks and Containers

500 #a Physical Markings: A purple stamp reading "FILM CENSORS PASSED FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION SINGAPORE" is located in the bottom right



Visual Content Elements

500 #a Typography: The main title is in large, stylized, orange Chinese characters, with the English title in smaller, colorful, block letters. Other text is in smaller, standard Chinese and English fonts. Visual Composition: The poster features a collage of caricatured figures with oversized photographic heads on illustrated bodies. The figures are scattered across the composition, engaging in various comedic or romantic activities. Object List: A woman reclining on the title characters, a man offering flowers, a woman in a bikini, an older man with a cane, a woman in a dress, a man in a barrel, a woman in an orange top, a man playing a guitar, a man driving a small car, a woman holding a tray, a man in a tuxedo, a chef holding a cleaver, a woman with a fan standing on a balcony, a tree, a streetlamp, two birds, a cat, a dog, a snake, a rat, a pair of shoes. corner.#5 CUY

Summary

520 #a The poster is a vibrant collage of caricatures, featuring photographic heads of actors superimposed onto illustrated, cartoonish bodies. The central focus is the large, stylized Chinese title in orange, with a woman reclining on top of it. Surrounding the title are numerous characters in various humorous and romantic situations, such as a man offering flowers, a man in a barrel, a man playing a guitar, and a chef with a cleaver. The overall tone is comedic and lively, with a beige background that makes the colorful characters and text stand out.



AI ANALYSIS RECORDS

500 #a Typography: The main title is in large, bold, red sans-serif characters with a yellow drop shadow, arranged vertically. Other text is in smaller, dark green sans-serif characters, arranged horizontally and vertically.

500 #a Visual Composition: The poster features a montage of characters. On the left, a large, faded portrait of an older man's face looms over a younger couple (a woman in a cheongsam and a man in a suit pointing). On the bottom right, a smaller scene shows a man and woman sitting on the grass, with two other women in the background. A small figure of a woman in a hat is near the bottom center. The background depicts a stylized landscape with a body of water and a mountain. The Shaw Brothers logo (SB in a shield) is in the bottom right corner.

500 #a Object List: A large floating head of a man, a couple standing, a couple sitting on grass, two women standing behind the sitting couple, a woman in a hat, a mountain, a body of water, a railing, the Shaw Brothers logo.

500 #a Physical Markings: The poster shows significant signs of wear, including water stains, discoloration, and tears along the edges.#5 CUY

520 #a The poster is a promotional piece for a Hong Kong/Japanese comedy film. It uses a montage style, combining a large, faded portrait of an older man with smaller scenes of younger couples in romantic or playful poses. The background suggests a scenic location, possibly Hong Kong, with a mountain and water. The color palette is dominated by muted teals and yellows, giving it a distinct vintage feel. The prominent red title draws the eye down the center of the composition.

650 0#a Film posters, Chinese.

78708#i Promotional material for (work):#t Xianggang san xiao jie.

88000#6 245-01#a 香港三小姐 :#b 港日合作輕鬆活潑諧趣喜劇.

88030#6 246-02#a 港日合作輕鬆活潑諧趣喜劇

Add additional info or research notes...

< > 1 / 1 Load RUN Save Clear

MARC DOWNLOAD DOWNLOAD ZIP

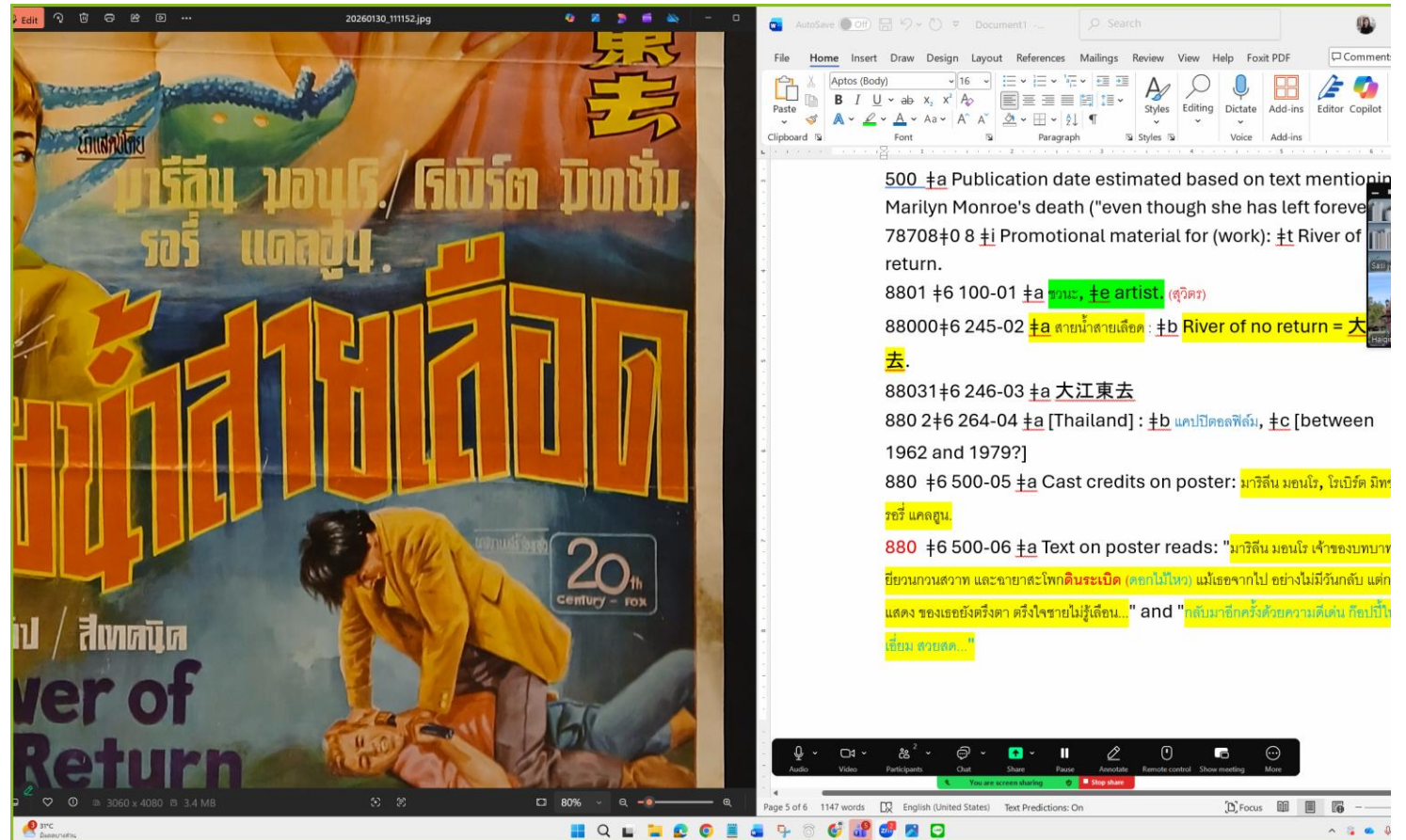
Condition and Damage

500 #a Physical Markings: The poster shows significant signs of wear, including water stains, discoloration, and tears along the edges.#5 CUY

Thai validation

I think the core field is accurate and sufficient to understand the poster. Just missing something minor and insignificant.

----From email



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a film poster for "หลานม่า" (หลานม่า) by MELLOW POP Entertainment. The poster features a young man and an older woman. The Thai title "หลานม่า" is prominently displayed in large blue font at the bottom center. Vertical Chinese text "姥姥的外孙" is on the left. Below the main title, there is text in Thai: "คุณก็กลับบ้านไปเมื่อไหร่ก็เจอ อาจไม่ได้เจอเราตรงนั้นตลอดไป".

Below the browser window is an AI chat interface. The prompt reads: "Your Role: You are a cataloging assistant describing a film poster as a physical item (not the film itself). Create a complete MARC 21 bibliographic record as a code that reflects the poster's physical and informational content. General Rules: - Use MARC 21 format with English-style punctuation (commas, periods, colons) throughout. - The main title (245 \$a) must be the text in the largest font on the poster. - Transcribe visible text in original script using a \$00 field (verbalm, no romanization or translation). - Use \$00 fields for non-Latin scripts (e.g., Chinese), linked via \$6. - Use field 787 to link the poster to the film being promoted. - If no poster publisher/distributor is named, treat the film distributor as the poster distributor. Cataloging Workflow: 1. Transcribe All Text - Capture all front and back text exactly as written. - Use one \$00 field to transcribe film credits in original script with English punctuation. 2. Identify Elements for MARC Fields: Element | MARC Field | Notes".

The AI response shows a MARC 21 record for the poster, including fields for title, color features, film credits, and digital capture specifications. The record is as follows:

```

Result: Marc21 record:
|||
LEADER 0000n1daa2200000 i 4500
001 CUJ123456
005 20240523100000.0
007 kh bo
008 240523c2024 th c n tha d
040 ## $a CUJ $b eng $c CUJ $e erda
245 00 $6 880-01 $a Lán mǎ.
246 11 $6 880-02 $a Lǎolao de wàisūn
257 ## $a Thailand. $2 mf
264 #2 $6 880-03 $a [Bangkok] : $b GDH. f. [2024]
300 ## $a 1 poster : $b color ; $c. dimensions not available.
336 ## $a text $b txt $2 rdaccontent
338 ## $a still image $b sti $2 rdaccontent
337 ## $a unmediated $b n $2 rdamedia
338 ## $a sheet $b nc $2 rdacarrange
500 ## $a Poster for the 2024 Thai film "หลานม่า".
500 ## $a Title from the most prominent text on the poster.
500 ## $a Color features: Black (approx. HEX #131517), brown (approx. HEX #ab076), light blue (approx. HEX #c6d3e5), and blue (approx. HEX #2379f2).
500 ## $a Film credits and other text printed on poster: "คุณก็กลับบ้านไปเมื่อไหร่ก็เจอ อาจไม่ได้เจอเราตรงนั้นตลอดไป", "姥姥的外孙", "ภาพยนตร์เรื่องแรกของบิวกัน พุฒิพงศ์ จาก GDH".
500 ## $a Digital capture specifications: Orientation: 1; ResolutionUnit: 2; XResolution: 72.0; YCbCrPositioning: 1; YResolution: 72.0.
500 ## $a Poster features a central image divided into two halves. On the left, a young man with dark hair looks to the right and smiles. On the right, an older woman with short white hair and glasses smiles towards the young man. The background appears to be an indoor or covered outdoor setting. The Chinese title "姥姥的外孙" is printed vertically on the left. The Thai title "หลานม่า" is printed in large blue font at the bottom center. Additional text in Thai is present below the central image and in the middle left. The text "MELLOW POP Entertainment" is repeated along the left and right borders.
246 ## $a Text in Thai, Chinese, and English.
650 #0 $a Film posters, Thai.
655 #7 $a Posters. $2 lcgt
787 00 $6 880-04 $f Promotional material for (work): $t Lán mǎ
880 00 $6 245-01 $a หลานม่า
880 11 $6 246-02 $a 姥姥的外孙
880 #2 $6 264-03 $a (ภาพยนตร์เรื่อง) : $b ภาพยนตร์, $c [2024]
880 08 $6 787-04 $f Promotional material for (work): $t หลานม่า
|||
  
```

The chat interface also shows a dashboard with classification "Graphic-Based Film Posters, Thai", domain "#131517", and average "#464548". It includes AI model settings for Gemini-2.5-pro and options for processing and exporting the record.

500 ## \$a Poster for the 2024 Thai film "หลานม่า".

500 ## \$a Title from the most prominent text on the poster.

500 ## \$a Color features: Black (approx. HEX #131517), brown (approx. HEX #534b44), beige (approx. HEX #ab8c76), light blue (approx. HEX #c6d3e5), and blue (approx. HEX #2379f2).

500 ## \$a Film credits and other text printed on poster: "คุณก็กลับบ้านไปเมื่อไหร่ก็เจอ อาจไม่ได้เจอเราตรงนั้นตลอดไป", "姥姥的外孙", "ภาพยนตร์เรื่องแรกของบิวกัน พุฒิพงศ์ จาก GDH".

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546 ## \$a Text in Thai, Chinese, and English.

The screenshot shows a chat window with a recipient list set to "Everyone". The message input field contains the text "Type message here...". The chat window is part of a larger interface, likely a video conference, as indicated by the presence of a "Participants" tab and a "Leave" button.

Conclusion .

AI helps with cataloging and metadata in three ways:

- ***Reducing Human Subjectivity:*** It helps catalogers minimize bias by providing a consistent, objective look at complex visual and compositional details.
- ***Overcoming Language Barriers:*** AI bridges these gaps by transcribing and processing text, ensuring titles, cast lists, and plot summaries are recorded accurately even if the cataloger doesn't speak the language.
- ***Enriching Metadata and Increasing Efficiency:*** By quickly organizing visual elements and dense text, AI streamlines the workflow, helping libraries generate detailed metadata much faster.