Good Enough Cataloging: Not Bad, Not Ugly

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Or...

W(h)ither Serials Cataloging?
WARNING:
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“There’s been a culture war between librarians and computer scientists.

And the war is over.

Google won.”

Peter Lyman
quoted in Washington Post
February 15, 2004

How We Got Here

• Because we could…and thought we should
• Work ethic; cheap help
• Cooperation!?
• Technology
  – OPACs not user-friendly
  – Records not user-friendly
Now What?

• Rule revision (yes, more!)
• Alternatives to standard practices
  – how the rules are applied
  – the quest for copy
  – levels of records
  – alternative formats: MODS
• Changes in cataloging culture
Rule Revision:

AACR3

- Throw out entire rule book + RI’s!
- Start over: re-examine *everything* to suit the new information environment
- A3 plans may already include some of these ideas
- Specifics presented here to dramatize the need for significant change
The New User

- Expects instant information
- Wants disintermediation
- Insists on simple interfaces:
  - “Googlization”
  - Amazon.com

The New Information Environment

- A-Z journal lists
- OpenURL linking from article databases
- Books & libraries no longer sole sources of information
- Different publishing environment
- Information formerly important on a catalog record unnecessary luxuries
The New Catalog Environment

• Key word searching!
• Many rules premised on dictionary catalogs with limited # of access points
• Alphabetical collocation may not be as necessary

Ugly Rules hit list:

• Terminology
• Transcription
• 3X5 card holdovers
• Start/end dates (serials)
• Uniform titles
• E-resource cataloging
Inscrutable Terminology & Notes

- Terms and usages such as “v.”, “imprint varies,” “extent of item”
- Omission of everyday terms
- “Cataloging style” notes which patrons do not read or do not understand:

No. 1-3 called also v. 3, no. 1-2 and v. 4, no. 3 in continuation of ser. IV of the council’s studies which this succeeds.

Transcription

- May only be necessary for rare resources
- “Prescribed sources” and brackets: ditto
- For online serials, type of browser and date viewed affect what is seen
- Are abbreviation conventions needed?
- Focus on what a resource says vs. what it is--essence rather than accidents
- And, exorcise…
The Ghost of the 3 X 5 Card

- Abbreviations (again)
- Main and added entries
- Non-standard capitalization of titles
- ISBD punctuation
- “Body” of description paragraph
  - Consequences for serials
Serials Beginning and Ending Dates

- No fixed location!
  - fixed field, 260, 362, 500 DBO or LIC note
- Confusing to patrons
- Confusing to reference staff
- ARE THESE DISTINCTIONS IMPORTANT?
- Who understands the distinctions besides (some) serial catalogers?

“Uniform titles” for Serials

- Costly
- Confusing and inconsistent, e.g. “Online”
- Mix of collocating and differentiating information in the same tag
- Qualification by place is confusing
- Does not permit FRBR-type collocation
Access to Electronic Resources

- How effective is “traditional” cataloging?
- Can catalogs compete with search engines? Now? In the future?
- How much of the digital universe can (should?) library catalogs cover?

“Laziness is the mother of invention.”

Reynolds
Alternatives to Standard Practices

• LC’s SWIG efforts
  – Minimal editing of copy
  – Series (again!)
  – “Slimmer” records
• LC’s Goal IV “access” level records
• More judgment; fewer prescriptions
MODS

- Proposed as one LC “mode” for e-resources
- XML
- No standardized content guidelines
- “Work-around” for resources where standard description not needed
- Conversion utilities (via MARCXML) by LC Net. Dev./MARC Standards Office

http://www.loc.gov/standards/mods/

---

```xml
<mods version="3.0" encoding="UTF-8">
  <titleInfo>
    <title>U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs</title>
    <titleInfo type="alternative">
      <title>Welcome to the Senate Banking Committee</title>
    </titleInfo>
    <name type="corporate" authority="naf">
      <namePart>United States</namePart>
      <namePart>Congress</namePart>
      <namePart>Senate</namePart>
      <namePart>Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs</namePart>
    </name>
    <typeOfResource>text</typeOfResource>
    <genre>Web-site</genre>
    <place type="text">Washington, D.C.</place>
  </titleInfo>
  <publisher>United States Senate</publisher>
  <dateIssued>2002</dateIssued>
  <dateCaptured encoding="w3cdtf">20081112</dateCaptured>
  <source>monographic</source>
  <kinds>
    <language>
      <languageTerm authority="iso639-2" type="code">eng</languageTerm>
    </language>
    <physicalDescription>
      <internetMediaType>text/html</internetMediaType>
      <internetMediaType>image/jpeg</internetMediaType>
    </physicalDescription>
  </kinds>
</mods>
```
The Quest for Copy

- Records from Utilities
- Records from other libraries
- Non-AACR2, non-English records
- Vendor records, e.g., Casalini
- Directory records, e.g., Books in Print, Ulrich’s
- Processing programs being developed, e.g., Z-processor
Ulrich’s Records

- Similar descriptions, *not* transcription-based
- Created with templates, pull downs, and publisher database
- “Editorial guidelines” for content = one slim document
- Training takes months rather than years
- Potential copy source using “Z-processor” conversion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ulrich's Records</th>
<th>AACR2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similar descriptions, not transcription-based</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Non-A2, Non-English, Records

- SRD experimenting with ZDB (Deutsche Bibliothek) records for e-serials
  - Converted from MAB to MARC 21
  - “Pre-processor” program and/or conversion macros can convert certain fields and notes
  - Possible new value to MARC 21 “rules” code to be proposed to indicate various kinds of hybrid records
WebCat Program

- In development at LC to create A2 records from Web pages
- Works when multiple resources have common presentation
- First application: monos in series
- Possible application: e-journals

WebCat resource

The Federal Reserve Board

Learning and Shifts in Long Run Productivity Growth
Rochelle M. Edge, Thomas Laubach, and John C. Williams
2004

Abstract: Shifts in the long-run rate of productivity growth—such as those experienced by the U.S. economy in the 1970s and 1990s—are likely to result from long-term dynamism, as opposed to transitory fluctuations. In this paper, we analyze the evolution of forecasts of long-run productivity growth during the 1920s and 1940s and examine the content of a dynamic general equilibrium model in order to identify shocks driving shifts in the long-run productivity growth rate. The model is a simple updating rule based on an estimated Calvo

LC Control Number: 2004019684

Type of Material: Text (Book, Monograph, Electronic, etc.)

Personal Name: Edge, Rochelle Mary, 1971-

Main Title: Learning and shifts in long run productivity growth [electronic resource]

Rochelle M. Edge, Thomas Laubach, and John C. Williams.

Published/Creator: Washington, D.C. : Federal Reserve Board, [2004]


Keywords: DSGE models, Exogenous, Real-time data, Learning, Productivity growth

Full text (PDF)


CALL NUMBER: 1777.5/d4

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- Store in Personal Word Wide Web

www.ala.org/alcts
“The perfect is the enemy of the good.”

Voltaire

Change Cataloging Culture
Examples

- Serialst: how to transcribe designation when month, day, year are present
- AutoCat: heading for conference on a cruise ship
- JSC: capitalization and coloured illustrations agenda items
- Total number of documentation pages about title proper transcription: (A2, RIs, CEG, CCM) = 83!

What is quality cataloging?

1st prize
The “Quality” debate

- Connecting users to content vs. painstaking, pedantic adherence to arcane rules
- Substance vs. form
- Factual accuracy vs. conformance to conventions
- User-friendliness vs. “catalogerese”

Training & Review

- Inexperienced catalogers need at least 2 years training to become “independent” at LC
- Trainers reinforce oral traditions; they prompt documentation of traditional practices
- Revisers/reviewers focus on minutiae
- LC serials catalogers’ promotion “portfolio” no longer required
Conclusions

- “Traditional” cataloging must change
- Apply traditional cataloging to fewer types of resources—maybe not to journals or Web sites
- Contribute expertise in controlled vocabulary, headings, relationships to other access modes

For A Few Dollars More...

Save the catalog!
Your traditions… or your catalog?

Thank you!

rrey@loc.gov