

ALCTS Task Group on the LC Working Group Report

On the Record: the Report of the Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control

Recommendations for Action

The ALCTS Task Group for Feedback on Library of Congress Working Group was appointed by the ALCTS Board of Directors in January 2008 to analyze the recommendations put forward in "On the Record," the Report of the Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control (LCWG). The Board specifically charged the Task Group to identify those recommendations that ALCTS is well suited to address. The Task Group consists of David Miller (Chair), Diane Dates Casey, John Chapman, Kate Harcourt, Meg Mering and Sally Smith.

The Task Group began its work by reaching out to the ALCTS Sections and the CRG, their Executive Committees, section committees and subcommittees, discussion groups, interest groups, etc., as well as to the ALCTS-level committees themselves. The Task Group asked for comments on which of the recommendations is it most important for ALCTS to address within a short- to medium time frame (1 to 3 years) and for any activities their group is already involved with, and/or are planning to undertake which address some of the report's recommendations. The Task Group also asked which recommendations their group (committee, DG, etc.) could be involved with, or help take responsibility for. The request sent by the Chair to the ALCTS Leaders list may be found as an appendix to this report.

The Task Group received responses from several individuals and groups. The ALCTS Education Committee and the "Harvard University Library Ad-Hoc Task Group on the WoGroFuBiCo Report" were the two groups which provided comments (the Harvard response was authored by Elizabeth Eggleston, Susan Pyzynski, Steven Riel, and Robin Wendler). *Individual* responses by current committee chairs were received from Laura Akerman (ALCTS Catalog Form and Function IG), Cheri Folkner (CCS CC:DA), and Mary Charles Lasater (CCS Chair), Individual responses were also received from (affiliations given for identification only) Diane Baden (Boston College), Galen Charlton (LibLime), M. Dina Giambi (ALCTS President-Elect), Marlene Harris (Chicago Public Library), Jeff Kosokoff, Shawne D. Miksa (SLIS, University of North Texas), and John Myers (Union College).

The Task Group is grateful to all who took the time to consider again the many issues raised by the LC Working Group and provide us with their thoughts. The Task Group read all comments received, and drafted this report, intended as directed for use within ALCTS, as compared with writing an "official" ALCTS public statement. The Task Group's report is structured according to the five sections of the LCWG report and consists both of commentary and areas where a particular ALCTS group either claims responsibility or the Task Group recommends that an area is appropriate for them to be responsible.

Several of the respondents made observations which, while not in relation to specific WG recommendations, suggested themes which the ALCTS Board and ALCTS groups should keep in mind as they proceed.

1. The ALCTS Board has recently put more focus on increasing the involvement of public librarians in division activities, and that emphasis should be maintained throughout this process. As Marlene Harris expressed it, "If the Library of Congress, or ALCTS for that matter, wants major participants, or major participation, from all types of libraries in the U.S., you need major representation from all types of libraries on the Working Group and on all the committees and all the task forces that deal with this issue all the way down the line [...]. This is especially true if you expect public libraries to participate in the action that is being called for. We need to be at the table from the very beginning, not just invited to send in comments. Sending in comments is not the same as seats at the table in some kind of proportion to our numbers in the community."

2. With regard to the resources needed to carry out many of the WG's recommendations, it is worth keeping in mind that the ALCTS Board has endorsed two recent statements which reject the "zero-sum game" approach to resource allocation. In its comment [1] on the WG's draft statement, the Board stated: "It is important that current economic conditions not be seen as unchangeable. We believe that, for the library community to move forward with these recommendations, the zero-sum outlook must be rejected. In addition to prudently examining the best uses of available resources, library leaders and managers need to be actively involved in advocating for appropriate resource levels. Failing this, it is likely that many of the LCWG's valuable insights will go unimplemented." A similar statement was included in the document, "ALCTS and the Future of Bibliographic Control: Challenges, Actions and Values" [2], under the heading "Budgets are the outcomes of political processes; budget decisions have ethical and moral implications."
3. ALCTS will continue to receive comments by members regarding political action, particularly with regard to funding available at LC for bibliographic control activities, and LC's status as a national vs. legislative library. The restrictions placed on ALA's lobbying activities are understood, but ALCTS should nevertheless evaluate how it might act on these comments.
4. Many of the recommendations directed by the "LC" are already in progress, as the ALCTS Board noted in its earlier statement. The same may be true for some of the recommendations directed at "All." The current status of work on any recommendation should be investigated before new actions are begun.
5. ALCTS should continue to recognize that concerns for quality go deep, and driven by far more than a conservative attachment to existing practices. As Laura Akerman put it:
"My personal opinion, but one that I believe is shared by many who have come to the interest group meetings, is that while there is much value in the recommendations, not enough emphasis has been placed on the crucial factor of quality control and evaluation for bibliographic records. Recommendation 1.2.4 speaks to increasing incentives to sharing of bibliographic records. A key barrier to sharing, and reason for much local effort, is lack of quality (roughly defined as accurate data that follows accepted standards, but ultimately, data that well supports catalog functions and user tasks). One of the main reasons Library of Congress "copy" is preferred by other libraries is our experience that LC practices quality control and we can have some assurance that it meets LC's detailed standards. Without better mechanisms for assessing quality and influencing record creators to provide it, plans for increased sharing will either be unsuccessful, or inclusion of lower quality records will, I believe, have a negative impact on ability of users to find and evaluate materials through our catalogs and other discovery environments, and thus on our mission.

[...] ALCTS as an organization has not played a direct role in the planning of LC, PCC and OCLC, but if we are looking at more involvement of a broad spectrum of libraries (or perhaps individuals) as record producers, perhaps it needs to, or needs to assist in creation of an ongoing organization that will address bibliographic quality issues for American libraries. A funding model for such an effort or organization would need to come outside of ALCTS regular dues structure; quality control activity would need to be factored in to the pricing aspect of record sharing."
6. Finally, the Task Group suggests that ALCTS take action to more closely align itself with the PCC in areas such as training, standards, record creation, research, and so on.

This top-level suggestion is implied in specific recommendations in all sections of the WG's report.

The Task Group appreciates this opportunity to assist in moving the LCWG report forward, and looks forward to seeing ALCTS take a leadership role in the process.

April 14, 2008

Section 1: Increase the Efficiency of Bibliographic Production and Maintenance

Section One focuses on achieving high quality bibliographic control through eliminating redundancies in the cataloging process, expanding the number of libraries creating, contributing, enhancing and maintaining original cataloging records through the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC), and increasing the number of libraries creating, contributing, enhancing and maintaining authority records. While many cataloging departments have already abandoned duplicative work in their cataloging workflows, these recommendations, as noted by Diane Baden, call for increased flexibility among catalogers in accepting, with little revision, cataloging records from other libraries besides the Library of Congress (LC). Increasing the level of trust in the quality of PCC-contributed bibliographic and authority records may encourage catalogers to embrace these records. Commenting on recommendation 1.2.4, Laura Ackerman, chair of the ALCTS Catalog Form and Function Committee, stated, "Without better mechanisms for assessing quality and influencing record creators to provide it, plans for increased sharing will either be unsuccessful, or inclusion of lower quality records will, I believe, have a negative impact on the ability of users to find and evaluate materials through our catalogs and other discovery environments, and thus on our mission." Several of the recommendations, such as developing crosswalks, conversion programs, and workflows to take advantage of networked resources, fully automating the CIP process, analyzing and changing internal processes and economic models at LC and PCC, creating incentives to contribute bibliographic and authority records to OCLC and internationalizing authority files, are clearly beyond the scope of a voluntary organization like ALCTS.

Nevertheless, Chapter One contains recommendations where ALCTS can take a lead role and make a difference in the future of bibliographic control. First, ALCTS is uniquely positioned to work on cataloging standards and modify those standards to promote data sharing. Second, a number of ALCTS committees currently exist which can act upon the recommendations related to the increased sharing of data generated by publishers, vendors, distribution centers and foreign libraries. Catalogers from Harvard University suggested that the Acquisitions Section can play a role here. Moreover, they suggested formally examining the barriers to sharing metadata including: impact of contractual restrictions on the redistribution of metadata, financial considerations (who provides incentives to whom for what), conflicting workflow options, work and manifestation identifiers (or lack thereof), metadata content and quality, maintenance and duplication of records, as well as encouraging work on international authority file or ways of linking records for the same entities in different authority files. The ALCTS Education Committee noted their readiness to develop programs/continuing education sessions on "tools and techniques for sharing bibliographic data at the network level." Third, ALCTS and its committees are situated to analyze the impact of LC practice on different types of libraries, especially public libraries, as Marlene Harris from the ALCTS CRG Affiliated and Regional Groups Committee emphasized repeatedly, to promote increased participation by libraries in PCC, and to collaborate in developing materials and training new PCC participants. Fourth, its long history of work in the area of authority data especially poises the CCS Subject Analysis Committee (SAC) to promote increased participation in creating, enhancing and maintaining authority data, developing tools to facilitate authority records creation, and investigating name authority and identity management. Additionally, SAC and the Committee on Cataloging: Asian and African Materials may be able to collaborate on creating a file structure to determine authoritative forms for different languages and specific geographic audiences. Finally, the correlation between users' behavior and the content of bibliographic records is a challenging task, but one of intense interest to ALCTS members. John Myers noted "We need to recognize and consciously reframe our 'user' research questions in terms, not of some monolithic 'user', but of variable 'information constituencies'." Laura Akerman stated that the recent activities of Catalog Form and Function has "most alignment with" this recommendation (1.1.5 specifically).

Below are enumerated Chapter One recommendations which ALCTS committees and groups should discuss/analyze and determine whether they apply to their charge or fall within their parameters and whether the recommendations have validity from their perspective. If the committee/group decides affirmatively on both counts, then it is the work of the committee/group to develop short and long range strategies to implement the recommendation.

Suggested Priorities for Section One:

First

1.1.1.2 Analyze cataloging standards & modify them to support data sharing – MARBI, CCS CC:DA, CCS SAC, CRS CRC, CRS Serials Standards

Second

1.1.1.1 Make use of bibliographic data from publishers, foreign libraries, etc. that doesn't fit exactly U.S. standards. – CCS CC:DA, CCS SAC, CCS Cataloging: Asian and African Materials, International Relations, Publisher/Vendor- Library Relations, CRS Continuing Resource Cataloging (CRC), ALCTS Education, Catalog Form and Function, Big Heads, AS Acquisitions Organization and Management

1.1.1.5 Work with publishers & other resources partners to coordinate data sharing – Publisher/Vendor – Library Relations, advocates: CCS CC:DA, CCS SAC, CRS CRC, Catalog Form and Function, Big Heads

1.1.1.6 Demonstrate to publishers the business advantages of supplying complete and accurate metadata – Publisher/Vendor Library Relations, AS Acquisitions Organization and Management, Big Heads

1.1.2.2 Use metadata supplied by sound recording, motion picture & other audio-visual distribution sources. - CCS CC:DA, CCS SAC

1.1.2.3 Use descriptive cataloging provided by book vendors & non-U.S. libraries whenever available - CCS CC:DA, CCS Cataloging: Asian and African Materials, International Relations

1.1.4.2 Promote widespread discussion of barriers to sharing data. - ALCTS Education Committee, CCS Education Committee

1.2.4.2 Explore tools and techniques for sharing bibliographic data at the network level using both centralized and non-centralized techniques (e.g., OAI-PMH). - ALCTS Education Committee

Third

1.2.1.3 Recognize the impact of LC practice on other libraries. - CCS CC:DA, CCS SAC, CRS CRC, Catalog Form and Function

1.2.1.1 Share responsibility for creating original cataloging according to interest, use and ability. - CCS CC:DA, CCS SAC, CRS CRC, ALCTS Education

1.2.3.3. Actively promote participation in the PCC - CCS CC:DA, CCS SAC, CRS Continuing Resource Cataloging (CRC), Catalog Form and Function

Fourth

1.3.1.1. Identify ways to promote wider participation in the distribution of responsibility for creating, enhancing, and maintaining authority data. – CCS SAC, CRS CRC

1.3.1.2 Work with others to enhance, expand, and make more affordable training opportunities in the area of authority data creation - ALCTS Education, CCS SAC, CCS Continuing Education Training Materials, CCS/PPC, CRS CRC

1.3.1.3 Explore the creation of more tools to facilitate authority record creation and to better integrate record sharing within library workflows. – CCS SAC, CRS CRC

1.3.2.1 Investigate convergences of name authority and identity management in various contexts, such as libraries, publishing, and repository management – CCS SAC

1.3.2.2 Bring together other communities working on problems of identification of authors and other creators; map the issues; and investigate possibilities for cooperation. – CCS SAC

1.3.3.3 Create a file structure that will enable institutions to determine which forms of headings are authorized for use in various languages and for specific geographical audiences. – CCS SAC, CCS Cataloging: Asian and African Materials

Fifth

1.1.5.1 Gather evidence on correlations between different types of user behavior and the content of bibliographic records, and to identify and prioritize areas where further research is needed - CCS CC:DA, CCS SAC, Catalog Form and Function, CRS CRCM

Section 2: Enhance Access to rare, unique, and other special hidden materials

This section contains some of the most ambitious ideas of the entire report. Away from the flash of suggesting we abandon MARC and stop RDA development, the LCWG has suggested some major changes in approach to an area of collections that is critical to all but the tiniest library systems. Providing access to rare and special materials is fraught with difficulties, but has huge payoffs. In a time in which sharing information for widely published and distributed materials is commonplace, and delivery and discovery services for them fall increasingly outside the bounds of library services, the issue of access to special materials is key.

High-level ALCTS strategy

It is a sensitive issue to suggest less rigorous cataloging, but many of the tasks here suggest an attempt to at least experiment in this area. In his comments, John Myers asked, "Is it better to provide poor access to many materials or complete access to limited but prioritized materials? And how do we prioritize access in the latter case? Is it more effective to provide initial access of questionable quality to all materials and then have to go back to revisit work when called upon? What if the initial poor quality metadata results in the material never being found again for upgrading? In a different context, is it better to have pockets of light in the darkness or is it better to exist in some muddling gloom?"

The LCWG has come down on the side of "muddling gloom," and this should also be the position of ALCTS, in attempting to find the best ways to tackle the vast backlogs of uncataloged or unprocessed special materials in libraries. The alternative is continue a focus on boutique cataloging that cannot be sustained in the long term. Cataloging these materials has long been considered an art; our profession will not be able to both work through backlogs and deal with our collection responsibilities of today without treating it as a science.

This section of the report shows a strong focus on the messages of Green and Meisner, in their article "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing" (*American Archivist* 68 (2005), 208-263). It is important for ALCTS groups to consider how the lessons of that article, oriented toward archival processing, can be usefully applied in other material contexts.

Areas of Focus for ALCTS:

2.1.1.2 All: Gather and share data on access paths that guide researchers to unique materials as a means to inform best practices for access in a Web environment.

ALCTS can encourage search and discovery analysis as a programming and publishing focus.

2.1.2.1 All: Adopt as a guiding principle that some level of access must be provided to all materials as a first step to comprehensive access, as appropriate. Allow for different cataloging levels depending on the types of documents, their nature, and richness.

2.1.2.2 All: Establish cataloging practices that are practicable and flexible, and that reflect the needs of users and the reality of limited resources.

The above two tasks set particular weight on the development of RDA and its associated efforts. The emphasis on limited cataloging resources will demand a two-pronged approach of protecting cataloging staff resources and developing skills in the new paradigms. As part of the move towards formalized levels of cataloging, ALCTS can also push for greater emphasis on cost and access metrics. If successful, the metrics and levels of cataloging thereby developed will assist in the next task:

2.1.2.4 All: Consider different levels of cataloging and processing for all types of rare and unique materials, depending on institutional priorities and importance and potential use of materials, while still following national standards and practices.

2.1.4.2 All: Study usage patterns to inform digitization priorities.

Continuing the theme above, ALCTS can encourage new approaches to measuring use of digital collections.

2.1.5.1 All: Encourage inter-institutional collaboration for sharing metadata records and authority records for rare and unique materials.

2.1.5.3 All: Examine financial and other incentives and disincentives to the sharing of records for rare and unique materials. Modify systems, practices, and agreements as necessary to increase incentives and decrease disincentives.

As one of the few organizations of its scale, ALCTS has an opportunity to affect the market here. The two tasks above require engaging with “Big Heads” and collection heads to determine methods to share costs and benefits, while making sure no one is overexposed on either side of that calculation.

Section 3: Position Our Technology for the Future

A substantial number of the recommendations in this section, especially in section 3.2, are highly process-oriented. In this sense, they constitute important considerations to be kept in mind when developing or revising standards, but possibly cannot be assigned as tasks for ALCTS groups to consider. Most of these recommendations will not, therefore, receive specific comment here.

3.1 The Web as Infrastructure

3.1.1 Develop a More Flexible, Extensible Metadata Carrier

3.1.1.3 All: Work with vendors to raise awareness of the need to begin developing products that can accept input of data utilizing a variety of metadata formats. A number of ALCTS bodies may be able to address this recommendation, including MARBI, CCS CC:DA, AS Technology Committee and Acquisitions Managers and Vendors IG, CRS Continuing Resources Cataloging Committee, and many of the ALCTS-level Interest Groups.

The Harvard University Library Ad-Hoc Task Group advocated “[convening] one or more vendor/librarian forums” to address this recommendation.

3.1.2 Integrate Library Standards into Web Environment

3.1.2.1 All: Express library standards in machine-readable and machine-actionable formats, in particular those developed for use on the Web.

3.1.2.2 All: Provide access to standards through registries or Web sites so that the standards can be used by any and all Web applications.

ALCTS can probably best advocate for, and help to implement, these recommendations with regard to the bibliographic control standards in which we play an active role. At present, these are MARC21 and RDA, but these points will apply to future developments as well.

3.1.3 Extend Use of Standard Identifiers

3.1.3.2 All: Work to include standard identifiers for individual data elements in bibliographic records, both prospectively and retrospectively, wherever such identifiers are defined, and work to identify changes in metadata carrier standards necessary to incorporate and use such identifiers.

MARBI is probably the most appropriate group for work on this recommendation (with an established collaborative relationship with LITA).

3.2 Standards

3.2.2 Improve the Standards Development Process

3.2.2.1 All bodies involved in standards development processes: Examine the processes and protocols used in the standards development process. Streamline them where possible, integrating or correlating them to processes in use by other bodies working on related standards to the extent feasible. Open the process to public scrutiny and participation to the extent that it does not unreasonably interfere with the goal of rapid development. Consider developing massive standards in segments so that parts can be put in use and tested before the whole is completed. Aid the work of volunteer developers by hiring more paid consultants and assistants.

Cheri Folkner, chair of CC:DA, stated that this was the recommendation she saw as “being most in line with CC:DA’s charge.” Because the RDA development process has, to an extent, served as a test case for this recommendation, her observations are worth quoting in full:

“Open the process to public scrutiny and participation to the extent that it does not unreasonably interfere with the goal of rapid development.”

CC:DA is trying to open up the process more to the public. For the drafts of RDA, ALCTS has set up a submission form for public comments. It appears to me that the number of people taking advantage of the form has dwindled over the number of drafts. That of course is anecdotal, but I could provide data for the time I have been chair if you want.

CC:DA is also in the process of providing read-only access to its email deliberations. The hope is that the announcement for that will go out next week. Although it will be read-only, people can contact their liaison if they want to provide input. My personal hope is that they won't all email me.

I do think the process could be more open if ALA (and I think it is an ALA issue, not an ALCTS issue) could more readily support the technology to make it more open. ALA Online communities was not a tool that would have enabled that. We have enough trouble with our internal CC:DA wiki being slow without having the additional load of providing access to the world. This is a very fine balance and I think difficult to achieve with the IT support at ALA and the JSC.

Consider developing massive standards in segments so that parts can be put in use and tested before the whole is completed.

RDA actually has been developed in segments and I think it has been detrimental to the process. Many of the issues ALA has raised with RDA are to be addressed in a section not yet complete. One of the biggest complaints from CC:DA members has been the difficulty of reviewing a product without the context of the whole.

Aid the work of volunteer developers by hiring more paid consultants and assistants.

This is an area that is again probably an ALA issue rather than an ALCTS issue, but CC:DA could probably get more done if there was support out there. I am careful with my requests to the ALCTS office to make sure they are things we absolutely need. No one has told me to do that, but it seems to me that the ALCTS office is understaffed for the number of groups they support.

Also, from my perspective, I think the ALA rep to the JSC needs to have some kind of assistance -- and not necessarily someone from CC:DA. From what I understand, the reps to the JSC from the national libraries have the resources to draw on assistants at their place of work [...]. Right now, members of CC:DA are helping John by drafting different documents and parts of documents. While this has been effective to an extent, the time frames are difficult to juggle with one's day job responsibilities."

The Harvard librarians indicated, as a high priority: "3.2.2.1: Revisit CC:DA's structure, processes and priorities and try to come up with something better. Consider institutional-membership funded, staffed standards development. Reliance solely on volunteers slows the standards development process."

3.2.4 Incorporate Lessons from Use into Standards Development

Laura Akerman, Chair of the Catalog Form and Function Interest Group, wrote: "We don't directly contribute to formulation of standards, etc. but have an interest in how the data resulting from these standards (or impact of not following them) gets used by end-users." She added that 3.2.4 is one of the recommendations with which the IG has "most alignment with."

3.2.4.3 All: Develop an evidence base that enables the community to validate the assertions that are being made about the need for a standard.

The Harvard librarians gave the following as a priority concern: "[an] evidence base for the profession, as suggested by the recommendation, needs a home. It requires some persistent organization to take responsibility for its creation and maintenance. ALCTS should collaborate with an existing open-access domain repository, namely E-LIS <<http://eprints.rclis.org/>> or DLIST <<http://dlist.sir.arizona.edu/>>, in gathering evidence-based studies that relate to library metadata and systems standards and in specifying metadata and retrieval requirements that will fulfill this need."

3.2.5. Suspend Work on RDA

On the surface, because the recommendations under this subsection are directed at the JSC, LC, and the DCMI, it seems as though an ALCTS response is not called for. However, because of the controversy surrounding this recommendation, and the implications for CC:DA, some observations should be made.

In its response [1] to the draft of the Working Group's report, the ALCTS Board expressed its lack of support for this recommendation. Two excerpts from that document summarize the Board's response:

"Consequences of Maintaining the Status Quo This section does not describe the consequences of maintaining AACR2 as the cataloging standard for an indefinite period. Suspension of work on RDA constitutes maintaining the status quo. The LCWG should make explicit the positive benefits of continuing with the status quo in this instance, alone among all instances in the Report."

"While vocal members of the cataloging community have consistently expressed doubts about and disagreements with the RDA development effort, there appears to be less confidence in the LCWG's articulated reasons for the suspension of work. Additionally, we are troubled that a well-reasoned alternative strategy or any assignment of responsibility to develop such a strategy in the near future is

absent. The glaring lack of any sense of collaborative process to facilitate moving forward is deeply disturbing.”

The Task Group received these comments from Dr. Shawne D. Miksa:

“[The] working group cautions against the 'consequences of maintaining the status quo,' specifically stating that doing so would result in new library professionals entering the marketplace who do not possess the skills to meet the demands of the job (pg.38). At the same time the groups recommends the Joint Steering Committee for the Development of RDA not move forward with completing the new guideline (section 3.2.5). The benefits of evolving our bibliographic control practices are daily demonstrated, and it would seem possible to articulate ‘use and business cases for moving to RDA’ at the same time the guidelines are being created. We can’t ‘shape the future bibliographic control environment’ (pg 39, desired outcomes) if we are trying in vain to satisfy all criticisms and concerns voiced before putting RDA into motion, and especially if we wait in vain for a constantly changing information environment to come to rest.

I believe that suspending work on Resource Description and Access (RDA) would set the cataloging community (both national and international) back several years and would effectively cement our profession as behind-the-times. No cataloging standards and rules will completely satisfy all user and resource description situations, but the dialog generated by adoption and implementation actions may help us to move forward, rather than maintaining the status quo.”

We also observe that work on RDA continues at its planned pace, with related developments such as the establishment of an RDA/MARC Working Group, and an IFLA preconference on RDA to be given this summer.

Nevertheless, there are aspects of this recommendation which contain suggestions for positive action.

The ALCTS Education Committee commented, on a footnote to 3.2.5.2, that they are interested in ;

“Conducting formal tests of sections of RDA with a cross-section of practicing catalogers, in order to assess its usability and training needs,” and added, "Assuming RDA implementation is going forward, this information would be invaluable to those planning and designing training materials."

In 3.2.5.1, the WG provides three conditions which should be met in order for work on RDA to continue: “a) the use and business cases for moving to RDA have been satisfactorily articulated, b) the presumed benefits of RDA have been convincingly demonstrated, and c) more, large-scale, comprehensive testing of FRBR as it relates to proposed provisions of RDA has been carried out against real cataloging data, and the results of those tests have been analyzed”.

In its response to the WG draft statement, the ALCTS Board comments on the first two of these conditions: “The LCWG needs to say who they have in mind to articulate and evaluate business cases for moving to RDA, and who has the authority and trust of the cataloging community to validate the benefits of implementing RDA.” It is possible that ALCTS itself may be able to address these questions, as they have significance beyond RDA development:

1) Given that very few libraries are, in fact, businesses, the common use of “business case” with regard to library operations is metaphorical. There is probably much less common agreement as to what this metaphor means than is presumed. This is particularly so when the idea of “business case” is applied to environments as varying as ARL libraries, regional public library consortia, and small school libraries. An ALCTS task force could study the concept of “business case” and articulate, with minimal reliance on metaphors drawn from other disciplines, what its meaningful application is to bibliographic control/technical services operations in a wide variety of nonprofit-organization environments. This should include qualitative as well as quantitative factors. Collaboration with colleagues in PLA and AASL could be sought.

2) The general issue of trust runs throughout the WG’s recommendations. In this case, it would be of value to conduct research on the status of “opinion leaders” in technical services librarianship, the extent to which they exert influence on practice and the reasons for this, as well as the cases in which trust is uncertain or absent.

Additional comments

From The Harvard University Library Ad-Hoc Task Group: 3.2.1.1: This recommendation, ‘develop a shared frame of reference and common design goals for a coordinated renovation of the shared bibliographic apparatus,’ is what has been missing from the piecemeal work on metadata models and standards. This is crucial to an effective transition from where we are now as a community to the still-ill-defined future we anticipate. ALCTS cannot take the lead here, but should be an active and engaged partner and facilitate this process in any way possible.

From John Myers:

“In Recommendation 3.1.1.1, [the WG] recommended that LC recognize that MARC is ‘no longer fit for the purpose.’ MARC is still supremely fit to the purpose for which it was designed – conveying bibliographic data to support catalog card production in a linear data storage environment. It is our information environment and needs which have evolved beyond its design parameters. [...] Much more fitting is Recommendation 3.2.1. Thoughts and practices with respect to content, coding, communication, and presentation standards for bibliographic data have become terribly fractured since we left the card environment. Part of this is due to the overwhelming complexity of the different emerging technologies involved and part is due to the speed of development in non-library applications in the various areas under question. I could not agree more strongly that a holistic approach to developing independent but mutually supportive solutions and standards is needed, as I interpret the call of 3.2.1.

More problematic in these sections is the tension between 3.1.1.2 and 3.2.5. Recommendation 3.1.1.2 proposes the coordination of ‘definitions and linkages of data elements in nationally and internationally accepted bibliographic standards,’ which sounds an awful lot like the work already in progress to develop RDA as a bibliographic standard that is applicable on a broad and international scope. Yet at 3.2.5, in one of the few highly specific recommendations of the report, it recommends suspension of work on RDA. I would not argue with an assessment that the RDA development process at the hands of the JSC has been shortsighted in the rush to put a new product to market. There should have been more extensive deliberation on principles and organization of the rules before the drafting process was begun. But the horse is out of the barn; we are where we are in the process. We need a completed RDA in order to assess its place in the coherent framework described at 3.2.1. And for a group so focused on financial models, I find it hard to accept the overlooking of financial repercussions for the Committee of Principals if 3.2.5 is carried through. Further, the report recommends development of an operational prototype, which is in fact under development in conjunction with the content at this stage. How will we test an operational prototype without the content to place in it?”

Section 4: Position our Community for the Future

Although neither ALA nor ALCTS were explicitly cited as potential leading players in this section's recommendations, the issues are of key interest to several ALCTS groups, and offer opportunities for partnerships outside ALCTS (particularly with LITA). Many respondents rightly noted that only by training today's librarians can libraries be positioned to shape the future. ALCTS must take the lead in promoting programs and workshops to support investigations into catalog design, metadata structures based on FRBR, and flexible uses of controlled vocabulary.

Section 4.1: Design for Today's and Tomorrow's User

The **ALCTS Education Committee** stated that section 4.1 in general is highly relevant to its current activities and future plans. For sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.3 (below), the Education Committee offered "Development of programs/continuing education sessions in methods for incorporating external information in library catalogs."

4.1.1.1 All: Encourage and support development of systems capable of relating evaluative data, such as reviews and ratings, to bibliographic records.

4.1.1.2 All: Encourage the enhancement of library systems to provide the capability to link to appropriate user-added data available via the Internet (e.g., Amazon.com, LibraryThing, Wikipedia). At the same time, explore opportunities for developing mutually beneficial partnerships with commercial entities that would stand to benefit from these arrangements.

ALCTS/CCS committees and discussion/interest groups, such as the CCS Subject Analysis Committee, the CCS Cataloging and Classification Research DG, and the ALCTS Catalog Form and Function IG may be able to address these two recommendations through study, programming and publication. The Continuing Resources Section may also be interested. Quick, web-based publications should be considered the norm. Collaboration with LITA should be sought here.

4.1.2 Integrate User-Contributed Data into Library Catalogs The ALCTS Education Committee offered "Development of programs/continuing education sessions in methods for integrating user-contributed data into library catalogs."

4.1.3 Conduct Research into the Use of Computationally Derived Data

See the comment by ALCTS Education on 4.1.1 above. John Myers also advocated "support of ongoing efforts along the lines of recommendations 4.1.1-4.1.3."

Section 4.2: Realization of FRBR

The **CCS Executive Committee** has noted the need for training in FRBR basics in its discussions with Shawne Miksa at the 2007 Midwinter Meeting. Although the WG report calls for more research on FRBR, the CCS EC is persuaded that substantial research has taken place and is ongoing. The EC's concern is that a substantial number of our colleagues need training in FRBR, both in preparation for RDA and, more critically, to understand research developments in areas such as online catalog development. Creative thinking and new experiments in data modeling should be taking place throughout our profession, not only in a few institutions or by vendors and utilities. ALCTS needs to support training at conferences, through regional workshops and online tutorials.

With regard to Sections 4.2 and 4.3 generally, Laura Akerman, ALCTS Catalog Form and Function Interest Group chair, stated: "Future programming ideas suggested by the report would include more presentations and discussions about user studies for particular user interfaces, experience with bibliographic data incorporated into networked products outside of the library catalog, use, display and navigation of LC subjects and other subject schemes, FRBR and "FRBRization" in library catalogs, experience with user tagging, and in general, impact of changes in standards on our online catalogs and on the work we do behind the scenes to make things happen. We would be interested in collaborating with the LITA Next Generation Catalog group and possibly involving system developers in our presentation."

Study and promote, via programming and publication, existing implementations based on FRBR, with particular attention to the variance among communities in how the distinction between work and expression is conceptualized. This distinction is not and will not be uniform across communities. Refer to the IFLA FRBR Review Group Bibliography for information about implementations, in addition to other

information-gathering activities. There has been discussion of establishing an ALCTS FRBR Interest Group: such a group could be a valuable informal forum for this work.

Section 4.3: Optimize LCSH for Use and Reuse

4.3.1.3: LC: Provide LCSH in its current alphabetical arrangement, and enable its customized assembly into topical thesauri.

4.3.1.4: LC: Increase explicit correlation and referencing between LCSH terms and LCC and DDC numbers.

Regarding these two recommendations, ask CCS/SAC to help study these points and see how LC may be assisted (depending on what LC decides to do).

4.3.2.2 All: Evaluate the ability of LCSH to support faceted browsing and discovery.

This may also be appropriate for SAC to study, in collaboration with LITA/ACIG.

4.3.3.3 All: Explore mechanisms to exploit cross-vocabulary linkages to enhance retrieval, without limiting to the headings explicitly provided in individual bibliographic records.

SAC: The work of the former SAC Subcommittee on Semantic Interoperability is relevant here. That work may be consulted to discover existing implementations addressing this question, particularly those in Europe. Collaborations with LITA/ACIG and the ALCTS Catalog Form and Function IG are possible.

4.3.4 Application of computational analysis and indexing of digital text to the cataloging process. The ALCTS Education Committee stated, "We could foresee collaborating with LITA on this topic, as well as more generally in the area of providing/developing continuing education."

4.3.4.1: All: For works where full text is available in digital form, study the extent to which computational analysis and indexing of the digital text can assist catalogers in subject analysis or can supplement or substitute for traditional intellectual subject analysis. (Note: this may vary by genre of work, audience, or access scenarios.)

As above, this may be an area where CCS/SAC may collaborate with LITA and the ALCTS Catalog Form and Function IG.

The Harvard University Library Ad-Hoc Task Group provided suggestions on the following two recommendations:

4.3.4.2 LC: Based on the results of the previous recommendation, examine the tradeoffs and potential resource savings of using computational analysis and indexing to substitute for some subject analysis.

4.3.4.3 All: Initiate a standards process that allows the various results of computational analysis and indexing to be interchanged and shared as part of bibliographic records, in order to permit sharing of metadata without necessarily sharing the underlying resource.

The Harvard group said, "Encourage research and publication on computational analysis of content to aid in metadata creation. Examine how such capabilities might be deployed in the library environment, e.g., who might create and maintain the algorithms, who would have the necessary access to the digitized content, where in our environment might processing take place, how would the results be incorporated into traditional metadata, what cost would make it worthwhile."

In a related matter, the Task Group read CPSO's report, *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Pre-vs. Post-Coordination and Related Issues* [\[1\]](#), with great interest. We recommend that SAC comment directly on the report and consider offering themed workshops on topics such as the integration of folksonomies into bibliographic records.

Section 5: Strengthen the library and information science profession

In order for ALCTS to address and implement the wide array of recommendations delineated in Section 5, ALCTS will need to commit resources from multiple groups to communicate within ALA and to work with LC, broadening some of the specific responsibilities delineated in 5.

The various designations of “All, LC, or ALA” in Section 5 might better specify collaboration with OCLC, OCLC regional affiliates, and state agencies that can support both research and training efforts to meet the needs in other sections of the report. Suggested replacements or expansions of responsibility are given in bold below.

The importance of reaching out to and including public, school and special librarians should be part of ALCTS’ future planning. This should be reflected by inviting the respective ALA Associations to participate in this effort. Additionally, ALCTS should consider ways to collaborate, or at least communicate, with state library associations. The latter are frequently able to connect at local levels with the librarians and library staff in various types of libraries who will need training, re-training or access to CE opportunities.

Responses from the ALCTS community mention the relationships between sections 3 and 5 several times, underlining the importance of available training for all as standards are born and evolve.

5.1 Build an Evidence Base

5.1.1 Develop Key Measures

5.1.1.1 LC: Bring key participants together to agree to implement a set of measures of (a) costs, benefits, and value of bibliographic control for each group of participants, and (b) interdependencies among participants. **Replace LC with ALCTS, PLA, OCLC, and AASL.** The Harvard University Library Ad-Hoc Task Group mentioned the important role ALCTS can play in helping to "establish and vet" these measures.

5.1.2 Support Ongoing Research

In addition to the groups noted below, the CCS Cataloging and Classification Research Discussion Group may find the recommendations in this section useful for their work.

5.1.2.1 All: Encourage ongoing qualitative and quantitative research (and its publication) about bibliographic control, for various types of libraries and over a protracted period of time. **Replace All with LC, ALCTS, OCLC regional affiliates, OCLC, and state agencies.**

5.1.2.2 All: Through library and information science (LIS) and continuing education, foster a greater understanding of the need for research, both quantitative and qualitative, into issues of bibliographic control. **Replace All with LC, ALCTS, OCLC regional affiliates, OCLC, and state agencies.** The ALCTS Education Committee noted that this recommendation was of particular interest to them: "5.1.2.2. Through library and information science and continuing education, foster a greater understanding of the need for research, both quantitative and qualitative, into issues of bibliographic control. (And through these sessions, encourage qualitative and quantitative research in bibliographic control in general (5.1.2.1) and, in particular, concerning the correlation between user behavior and the content of bibliographic records (1.1.5.1 and, to some extent, 3.2.4))."

5.1.2.3 All: Work to develop a stronger and more rigorous culture of formal evaluation, critique, and validation, and build a cumulative research agenda and evidence base. Encourage, highlight, reward, and share best research practices and results. **Replace All with LC, ALCTS, OCLC regional affiliates, OCLC, and state agencies.**

5.1.2.4 All: Promote collaboration among academics, the practicing library community, and related communities, as appropriate, in the development of research agendas and research design, in order to assess research needs, profit from diverse perspectives, and foster acceptance from the broader information community.

5.1.2.5 All: Improve mechanisms to publicize and distribute research efforts and results. **Replace All with LC, ALCTS, OCLC regional affiliates, OCLC, and state agencies.** Laura Akerman noted that this recommendation is one with which the ALCTS Catalog Form and Function IG has "most alignment." The Council of Regional Groups may have a role to play in 5.1.2.4 and 5.1.2.5.

Regarding 5.1.2 in general, the Harvard librarians commented: "ALCTS is well suited to foster research and publication into issues related to bibliographic control. Use the CCS Research and Publication

Committee to encourage and publicize research. Increase the focus on the science of library science in all venues and mechanisms (e.g., discussion groups, programs, committee work, publications)."

5.2 Design LIS Education for Present and Future Needs

The ALCTS Education Committee noted section 5.2 has potential for collaboration with ALISE (the Harvard group made the same point). Cross-committee work, among the ALCTS and Section Education committees, may also be pursued.

5.2.1 Communicate with LIS Educators

5.2.1.1 ALA: Convene a biennial meeting with LIS educators and trainers to discuss new and changing policies, procedures, processes, and practices in bibliographic control. **Expand to include ALCTS, OCLC regional affiliates, and state agencies.**

5.2.1.2 ALA and all information communities: Assess and communicate to LIS programs the levels of demand for qualified professionals in the field of bibliographic control, as well as the knowledge and skills needed by such professionals. **Expand to include ALCTS, OCLC regional affiliates, and state agencies.**

5.2.1.3 ALA Committee on Accreditation: Seriously consider the inclusion of specific language in the Curriculum standards that recognizes the central importance of bibliographic control to information and knowledge discovery and management.

The ALCTS Education Committee and CCS CETRC could emphasize this recommendation to the COA.

5.2.1.4 LIS programs: Require core levels of knowledge for all information professionals in the fundamentals of knowledge organization theory and practice, including application not only in libraries, but also in the broader range of related communities and information activities.

5.2.1.5 LIS programs: Make available curricula covering advanced knowledge and skills to those who intend to specialize in bibliographic control, as well as to promote and support doctoral students interested in principles of bibliographic control.

5.2.2 Share Educational Materials Broadly via the Internet

The ALCTS Education Committee commented that this section "relates to 1.3.1.2 and issues of affordability."

5.2.2.1 All: Make educational materials available over the Internet, free or at reasonable cost. **Replace All with ALA, ALCTS, PLA, LC, OCLC affiliates, state agencies.**

5.2.2.2 All: Use network capabilities and other distance learning technologies to increase the availability of education for all library staff. In particular, encourage the creation of courses that can be taken at the learners' convenience. **Replace All with ALA, ALCTS, PLA, LC, OCLC affiliates, state agencies.**

The Harvard group commented, "5.2.2.1-5.2.2.2: Low cost, Internet-based training opportunities and materials are a key benefit that ALCTS can provide." The work of the CCS/PCC committee on Continuing Education Training Materials is relevant to these recommendations.

5.2.3 Develop Continuing Education for U.S. Library Profession

5.2.3.1 ALA and ALA Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA): Consider development of a U.S.-wide continuing education program in bibliographic control that could be hosted by a professional association or academic institution. **Expand ALA and APA to include ALCTS, OCLC regional affiliates and state agencies.** The ALCTS Education Committee asked, "Shouldn't ALCTS be that professional association?"

5.2.3.2 ALA and ALA-APA: Develop an economic model that can ensure sustainability of the continuing education program developed in the recommendation above. **Expand ALA and APA to include ALCTS, OCLC regional affiliates and state agencies.**

General comments:

Marlene A. Harris:

"Page 38 Design LIS Education--The critical shortage of faculty is not addressed in this recommendation. At last report, of the 55 LIS programs, only 11 had one or more full-time faculty member with a concentration in cataloging. Most rely on adjunct faculty or doctoral students. The report is correct that libraries face a critical shortage of professionals with skills in bibliographic control. But who will teach the people we need to hire? The lack of qualified faculty in this area is even more dire.

You asked in your questions which issues need to be addressed, especially by ALCTS, in the short to medium term. If LC is truly going to become less of a supplier of MARC records, the ripple effect is going to cause a tsunami. Processes have grown up for the last 30+ years that expect LC to be at the center of the universe, and if they become "first among equals" the change will be huge. ALCTS could be at the heart of the re-education and public relations effort that will need to take place, to help libraries make cataloging important again, important to the deans and directors who allocate the staff we will need to create or edit records into OCLC that LC is no longer providing, in addition to all of the digitizing that we are ourselves doing. Our own operations are as efficient as they can get, in most cases. Removing LC from the supply chain will make things less efficient for most of us.

[...]

The education problem is a long-term problem, and it's the worst, but it may not be ALCTS to solve in the long-term. In the short term, encouraging ALCTS members to serve as Adjunct Faculty, or guest lecture on careers in Cataloging or Technical Services helps get people into the profession, but we need more faculty badly. If ALCTS could sponsor a couple of Ph.D. fellowships, that would be an immediate solution that would actually make a big difference. With only 55 library schools and 11 cataloging faculty, even 1 or 2 new Ph.D.s makes a dent."

John Meyers:

Sections 3 on standards and 5 on education are closely linked. [...] In 5.2 the WG rightly underscores the impending problem of the dearth of catalogers. I can agree with almost everything they state in their opening paragraphs. But I think they underestimate the scope of the problem and its solutions. They are simplistic in setting up the binary of libraries vs. information industry. Both sides are needed, and yes, libraries need to be able to converse in the language of the information industry. It is not enough for catalogers to know ISBD/MARC/AACR2 or their successors. They also need awareness of the highly technical languages of new metadata standards and models such as RDA and DCAM. This will be a challenging squeeze on the cataloging curriculum, already afforded secondary stature at many library schools. How do we provide the necessary training for librarians to perform or oversee real day-to-day cataloging and also impart the foundations and flexibility to cope with and adapt to an ever changing metadata landscape? **I fully support the recommendations in 5.2, and in particular all the specifics under 5.2.1 but wish the WG had more openly acknowledged the challenges in implementing them.**

M. Dina Giambi:

ALCTS should certainly continue to offer training and continuing education especially related to new standards. If RDA is indeed released in early 2009, ALCTS should be prepared to offer the library cataloging community training opportunities, both in person and online. This would be an excellent opportunity for ALCTS to collaborate, as it has done in the past, with a number of other organizations such as OCLC networks, government agencies, etc. We should use our strengths in this area and build on them.

There are a number of recommendations that the report refers to ALA taking action, but I would think that it is ALCTS that would actually take the lead.