Reports from the MOUG Annual Meeting

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ordys, correcting typos and MARC coding errors, and adding value to records with contents and other notes.

Hermine Vermeij described her experience with record replacement at UCLA, a library with very good reason to want to replace records in Connexion rather than making local changes in its catalog, since it uses WorldCat Local as its ILS. The language skills of UCLA’s cataloging staff are leveraged by creating parallel records through OCLC’s National Level Enhance program. Vermeij also outlined how she might personally evaluate a record’s quality and the changes she might make to it, checking tagging, access points, and adding identifiers for a manifestation. Her process closely aligned with OCLC recommended practice and the comments of the other panel participants. She also noted that noticeable quality issues would warrant a much closer examination of the entire record.

Following the panelists’ presentations, there were many questions from conference attendees which led to a lively discussion of issues surrounding the etiquette of replacing records. Catalogers were encouraged to contact a creating or contributing institution with perplexing questions about a bibliographic record, or even to examine the local instance of a record in a holding library’s catalog. Some questions were rather succinctly resolved, including confirmation that the presence of significant accompanying material is considered sufficient cause to create a new record (subfield “c” in the 300 field now being a part of OCLC’s deduplication detection algorithm).

Other issues raised were stickier. Despite the guidelines given in Chapter 4 of OCLC’s Bibliographic Format and Standards (“When to Input a New Record”), many catalogers grapple with changes in publication and distribution status of scores. A familiar example is the addition of a Hal Leonard distribution number to an otherwise unchanged item. No clear consensus emerged about what to do in such situations, though several alternative approaches were presented from simply adding the new number to the existing bib record to creating a new record to reflect the change in publication and/or distribution status. OCLC’s policy is that “there is no formal ‘threshold’ of needed changes that makes a record worth Enhancing” and advises catalogers to be responsible and to use good judgment. While clear-cut answers did not necessarily emerge, the principles of cataloger’s judgment were supported by thoughtful and perceptive comments from Jay Weitz, the panel, and comments from attendees of the plenary.

Reported by: Jennifer Vaughn (Syracuse University Libraries)

Plenary Session II: RDA and Authorities

Kathy Glennan, University of Maryland
Jean Harden (University of North Texas)
Morris Levy (Northwestern University)

In Tuesday evening’s plenary session, RDA and Authorities, the panelists introduced issues related to RDA and authorities, then described practices at each of their institutions. The panelists spent the latter portion of the session addressing specific questions about RDA and authorities, most of which came from a speedily met call for questions on MOUG-L.

Kathy Glennan (University of Maryland) began by defining the scope of the session. “RDA and authorities” has two meanings: creating authority records (ARs) in RDA, and creating authorized access points (AAPs) in bibliographic records that follow RDA, with or without corresponding authority work. General challenges include keeping current with RDA and the Library of Congress-PCC Policy Statements (LC-PCC-PSS), avoiding split files, the “667 of doom” in non-RDA authority records, workflows where maintaining AAPs is not under one’s control, and balancing productivity with creating accurate AAPs and ARs.

Kathy’s position at the University of Maryland means that she is functionally the head of original cataloging, and she is also the University of Maryland’s NACO coordinator. Kathy’s approach to authority work reflects work at a NACO/BIBCO library. The decision whether to create an AR and how to prioritize is influenced by whether doing so allows creation of BIBCO record, how many ARs need to be established, and relative efficiency (for example, establishing ARs for six works by one composer may be easier than six works by different composers). Kathy prioritizes what would be most useful, deprioritizing cases such as distinctive titles without variants. The availability of online sources helps.
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Kathy mentioned several particularly difficult situations with names; establishing Russian names with Cyrillic without being able to read Russian; determining the form of name when many forms appear (for example, she recently changed the name authority record for Wassily Sapellnikoff, who had multiple variant spellings for both his first and last names); and finding resources with conflicting information such as birth dates (Paul Frank at Library of Congress recommended creating two 046 fields and citing the source for each). Name-title challenges include determining what constitutes a cognate under RDA (contradanse/country dance) and what to put in field 380 for form of work when there is no term in LCSH (prelude, etude). Kathy turns to an authority file search to see what others are doing in those cases.

Jean Harden (University of North Texas) described “a practical approach that works at our shop.” Harden currently does not create authority records. The Music Library at UNT does not control authority work, meaning that an AAP used in a music record can be changed when ILS (Innovative) batch changes are made to headings to conform to the current AR, considered “inviolable.” Much of the cataloging is done by student assistants, so procedures are tailored to ease of training; however, students are expected to read instructions, research headings, and be mindful of changing rules.

Catalogers at UNT are making AAPs in their bib records conform to RDA as much as possible. If there is an authority record in OCLC, catalogers use the heading regardless of “667 of doom” (“THIS 1XX FIELD CANNOT BE USED UNDER RDA...”). If there is no AR but there is an existing pattern of headings, they follow that pattern (for example, the AAP pattern for Symphonies no. 1, 2, 4 will be followed when cataloging Symphony no. 3). If there is no authority record or pattern, they construct the AAP in the bib record as if RDA. The workflow and research for RDA name and name-title headings does not differ from AACR2. If no information is available to differentiate names, $c with RDA punctuation/capitalization is used. If no title information is available, they use the title found on the item in hand as long as it is “reasonable.” Jean reported that students enjoy the detective work, and it provides a teaching opportunity on using and interpreting sources.

Morris Levy (Northwestern University) described the environment at Northwestern, where authority work is extensive. The Northwestern Libraries have been a long-time NACO/BIBCO participant. At Northwestern, the goal is “making all local records the most RDA they can be in preparation for migration from Voyager to Alma.” They see an opportunity to regularize records using RDA while following PCC recommendations for RDA-compliant all access points in all new/edited records. Authorized catalogers create or edit ARs for access points as needed. Levy reported that this initially had an impact on productivity, but supervisors understand the importance of establishing well-reasoned access points and expect catalogers to do so with a reasonable amount of time and effort. Local decisions regarding the degree to which to pursue optional fields in ARs have helped smooth the workflow.

Morris reviewed music and non-music bibliographic and authority records during Northwestern’s RDA test period, and he is a reviewer for the NACO Music Project (NMP). Through the NMP, Morris and Northwestern colleague Tomoko Shibuya have so far contributed 812 new names and changed 4,999 names. It is a lot of work, but it fits the philosophy of Northwestern and its Music Library. Morris ended with a plug for NMP: “If you are interested and have the ability to participate in the NMP, please do!”

The panel then responded to questions, taking some from the floor and working through pre-submitted questions. As might be expected from a MOUG audience, discussion was lively, and the session ended before all questions could be addressed. Questions discussed in the session covered variant access points for translations and arranged excerpts, recording medium for arrangements, including key in revised AAPs for works with generic titles, AAPs for vocal works with accompanying ensembles, and the use of field 368 in ARs for corporate bodies.

The first question from the floor related to expressions: Assuming one is not creating expression authority records for distinctive titles, how do people (end users) get to the title if there is no 400 with the title in foreign language (for example, an opera)?

Answer: It is unlikely any current system will use the authority file with keyword searches. To address the broader question of authority records for expressions, we are being asked not create different authority records for each arrangement of one work. For translations, it is reasonable to create an authority record for that translation and to have foreign titles as variants in the AR for the original. Responses from the floor confirmed that the practice of adding multiple languages as references to one AR has not changed, and authority records can be created for translations. It was noted that librettos are a separate problem...gracefully dodged by the panel.

A follow-up question from the floor sparked discussion: Why would you not create an authority record for each arrangement (different instrumentation) of an instrumental work but would for a case such as an opera with translated titles?

One response from the floor was that it is useless to have an authority record for “Distinctive title; arranged” without references. Kathy noted that the resulting scenario could be “endless” authority records for each expression. Another floor participant wondered if the phrase

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The lightning talk speakers each had five minutes to present a problem they encountered under RDA cataloging, with the exception of the last two speakers, who were given ten minutes. To see detailed record examples and the particulars of cataloging decisions, refer to each speaker’s slides (available on the MOUG website).

“Something Old and Something New: Applying RDA to Music Manuscript Description” by Sonia Archer-Capuzzo, University of North Carolina at Greensboro:

Sonia showed us a fascinating handwritten manuscript which was signed not with the composer’s name (Lev Aronson) but with his concentration camp identification number, and debated about how to reflect the significance of this number in the record. Ultimately Sonia recorded the number in the 100 field and constructed a 500 note with contextual information. She also encountered challenges with differing sizes between the score and the part, deciding how to indicate the piece was handwritten, variant spellings of the composer’s name, and deciding whether entering medium of performance and key in the 38X fields.

“A Swamp of Pseudonyms: The Expanding Authority Record of Livingston Gearhart” by Rebecca Belford, University of Buffalo

Rebecca showed us three different pieces sporting four pseudonyms of the composer Livingston Gearhart: (1) Orlando Coole; (2) A. Hawley Barry; and (3) Minnie Trips A’Brawd and I. Ben Allover. Her challenges included confirming these pseudonyms as actually belonging to Gearhart, then performing extensive authority work for these pseudonyms and the original NAR, and finding justification under RDA to mention Gearhart in the bib records for the various pieces. In some cases, she was able to justify this inclusion, but not in others.

“Confronting the Unknown: Taking the Plunge, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the New Standard” by Sarah Hess Cohen, Florida State University

Sarah gave an overview of her experience transitioning from AACR2 to RDA, noting that she was “utterly terrified” this time last year. Although she had invested a lot of time in studying RDA and attending workshops and webinars, she still felt trepidation about a number of things, including getting sucked into the “Cascading Vortex of Horror.” But Sarah found that her familiarity with RDA has greatly increased with use, and that in fact her library’s cataloging backlog remained manageable despite the upheaval of transition—so in short, we can relax! We are all learning together, and ultimately the benefits of RDA outweigh the drawbacks.

“Special Formats, Familiar Records: Cataloging Reel-to-Reels and 78s in RDA” by Beth Iseminger, Harvard University

Beth walked us through the cataloging of a reel-to-reel tape and a 78 rpm disc and highlighted the differences between the two records. She found the formats chart from MLA’s Best Practices for Music Cataloging document (p.43-49) a helpful reference for recording and encoding the physical description of these items. In her example records she drew attention to fields not identified as RDA core but still recommended by MLA, like the 340 for base material and a more structured 518 for recording date of capture.

“All pre-submitted questions, including those unaddressed at the session, and the panelists’ prepared answers will be included in the September issue of the Newsletter.

Reported by: Rebecca Belford (University at Buffalo)