CATALOGING QUALITY AS A COMMUNICATIVE PROCESS

A presentation given to the ALCTS/CCS Cataloging Norms Discussion Group at ALA Annual Conference, June 26, 2004

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Communicative Methods of Record Quality Improvement

1. Hunting for Typos, or Being Persistent
2. Library Staff Perceptions of Cataloging Quality
3. Direct & Indirect Communication “via record”
Hunting for DLC Typos

DLC

245 10 |a Analog VSLI design automation [Error]

245 10 |a Analog VLSI design [Should be]
DLC Copy in the Libraries

- No error (30)
- Error (28)
- No info (14)
Be Persistent Hunting Errors

- Report OCLC or DLC errors immediately
- Check corrections after 2-3 months
- Put an e-mail option to report errors on the OPAC
- Establish a library-wide policy for reporting errors
- Train staff & student assistants in how to report errors
Janus-faced Catalogers: Quality Motivation

PEERS at OCLC

LIBRARY STAFF at HOME
Library Staff Perception on Cataloging Quality: Circulation

- Focus on matching label/record/physical item information
- Role in cataloger’s work evaluation
- Interdepartmental communication
- Accuracy and consistency as elements of cataloging quality
PEERS

COPY CATALOGING

OCLC DATABASE

LOCAL CATALOG

REFERENCE

SYSTEM SUPPORT

CIRCULATION

CATALOGER

END USERS
Library Staff Perception of Record Quality: Copy Cataloging

- The largest group of catalogers
- Role: productivity and accuracy of description
- Focus on comparison, evaluation, editing, and adaptation
- Information is justified by an “item in hand” or by standard wordings
- Result: MARC records are “crafted” for copying
OCLC Members’ Records: Methods of Quality Improvement

- OCLC members: 9498 suppliers
- Enhancement libraries: 180
- How can catalogers of 9000+ members’ libraries get their records revised by the experienced peers from 180 enhancement libraries?
Communication via Records: Self-Improvement Method

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<th>FIXED FIELDS</th>
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*500 Was: 1st published Changed to: Originally published

**240 UT deleted. WHY?

***830 Series changed from authorized to unauthorized heading. WHY? AR4231380

****740 Article "The" deleted
Quality control, evaluation of skills & increased confidence in quality of records are the main results of my research.
The New OCLC Connexion Browser Review File is potentially useful.

To activate the Review File potentials, mechanism is needed.

The ALCTS Education Committee program? PCC trainers? Other ideas?

A Review Program can help to increase OCLC Members’ Record Quality.
Conclusion:

- Records have a communicative nature; they are “crafted” for users and reflect user’s needs and perceptions of quality.
- Peers and local libraries’ staff are two important groups that motivate a cataloger and perform informal control on cataloging quality.
Conclusion (cont’)

- In a cooperative environment, more active communication often has a result of better cataloging quality
- If direct communication is not available, use method of indirect communication “via record”
- Build reviewer networks using the OCLC Connexion Browser Review File; it will benefit smaller libraries’ record quality