

Current and emerging trends in cataloguing

We live in a fast paced digital age. The growing popularity of the Web influences all aspects of our life, has changed the way we live, work, study and even think. As a result the role of library and information professionals is subject to radical changes. Catalogue is the core of every library, a basic tool of retrieval in any document collection. A library without a catalogue cannot fulfill its functions efficiently. The practice of collecting written knowledge in some sort of repository in a certain order is old as civilization itself. It does not lose its importance nowadays when we strive to retrieve some relevant information in the chaos of the net.

I'd like to draw your attention to the profession of a cataloguer, which I love, and which is more often, taking into consideration my colleagues, attract people demonstrating such qualities as dedication, creativity, persistency, and enthusiasm. Cataloguers played a key role in organization of recorded knowledge of the human civilization thus making records searchable and retrievable. I am telling these well known facts in view of a modern trend to acquire a wrong attitude to a role of cataloguing profession. One can come across with reports of the so-called "restructuring" and closure of cataloguing departments. There is a tendency to reduce and eliminate the professionals who catalogue which results in databases full of errors, low quality records, duplicating of records and inconsistencies, and eventually to the "de-professionalisation" of cataloguing. It is important that collections are being developed and maintained by professionals who understand the structure of the information.

Another trend arises, the tendency is that the present generation of cataloguers is retiring or is close to join those "young at heart", which means the loss of professional memory. We need specialists with broad understanding of the principles of cataloguing and bibliographic control. The library users depend of the dedicated and quality work of cataloguers which can save time and frustration while searching for the desired information. The growth of information technology and computerization add to the need for that quality.

In this situation we turn to the library schools, and to our greatest disappointment, find out that cataloguing is not even a core subject in many of them. The concern over the cataloguing training is international. I have come across over a very interesting online survey conducted by Cynthia Boeke (the assistant curator for The American Society for Cell Biology's Image & Video Library). One of the questions in the survey was: "What do you think is the most important issues facing catalog profession right now, and why it is so important?" Many participants showed their concern that not enough students are attracted to the subject of cataloguing, as well as the decreasing amount and quality of cataloguing training in library schools nowadays.

Below are some extracts from this survey:

"The lack of professional librarians who want to pursuer a career in cataloging is the most important issue right now. Why? Without catalogers, access to the bibliographic

resources owned by libraries won't happen." Cynthia Whitecre, Manager, Metadata Quality Dept., OCLC.

"I consider the education and training of future catalogers to be critical. During the past ten years, many library schools ceased making 'organization of information' a required course. As result, many library school students haven't had the opportunity to discover cataloging as possible profession for them. Cataloging courses that do exist are often inadequate, inconsistent, or too difficult" Billie Hackney, Head of Monograph Cataloging, Getty Research Institute.

"Cataloging is less and less represented in courses (at least in France), whilst it should be more and more developed. A student recently said to me: 'The catalog stands at the core of all library services, why does it not stand at the core of a library curator's formal training?'" Patrick Le Boeuf, curator of the National Library of France.

Recent literature recognizes the challenges faced by library schools today and prompt educators to implement effective teaching strategies and methodologies. There are examples of possible creative solutions.

Having said this, I'd like to mention a highly interesting and innovative approach to teaching descriptive cataloguing at the University of Queensland by utilizing various innovative methods and media for teaching activities, where students were encouraged to think critically about broader issues. The results of this pilot project are "beyond expectations" as students clearly indicated that learning about descriptive cataloguing, a good knowledge of AACR and MARC is highly relevant. (Gillian Hallam "Beyond our expectations: a review of an Independent learning module at the Queensland University of Technology")

The project at the University of Queensland is an evidence that there are ways to attract the students to this challenging and, to my mind, satisfying profession. The profession that has a long and honorable history behind it.

Nowadays the ever-expanding growth of information and information technology, increasing volumes and multiple formats of information, changing user expectations and behaviors brought about even higher levels of challenges for cataloguers.

To pursue professional ethics in creating timely and high quality records cataloguers are to develop a new mindset to deal with the increased complexity in cataloguing. New technologies require new skills. The modern cataloguer has to be multi-skilled, computer literate, able to operate different in-house library systems, able to use the online packages, such as MARC21 standard online, WEB Dewey, LCSH Authorities, LA Search interface, Sanborn Cutter, national and international union online catalogues.

The cultural changes in the society brought about additional requirement. The modern cataloguer has to be multilingual, able to catalogue materials in different languages, including those in non-Roman script, able to insert vernacular statements into the bibliographic record.

Cataloguers have to keep pace with the changing environment, managing materials in new formats, manipulate different metadata schemes, catalogue for diverse user environments and audiences.

Print materials do not go away. However, materials in traditional format are to be used in combination with new digital and electronic formats. At the moment we catalogue a variety of electronic resources, among them are CDs, DVDs, CD-ROMs, VCDs, etc. It is important for cataloguers to maintain the quality of cataloguing for effective discovery of these materials. Remote access electronic resources are the next challenge to cataloguing which require talented individuals orientated in the electronic area, able to identify the most valuable resources for the on-line catalogue and to create collections of well organized information available in digital form.

Development of new formats require modifications of the classification, bibliographic rules and subjects headings. In the next few years we will have the new addition of the Dewey Decimal classification. We can expect the expansion of class numbers for computer science, philology and literature of languages not represented at present. LC Subject Headings are being frequently reassessed and updated.

Of high importance are the news from the Joint Steering Committee which is preparing a new addition of cataloguing rules for publication in early months of 2009. Recently the committee decided that the new cataloguing code will be called "Resource Description and Access" or RDA. The most notable changes between RDA and AACR2 will be a statement of cataloguing principles, revised rules of the chapter on the electronic resources, addition of sections of bibliographic relationships, and authority control, incorporating FRBR terminology and concepts. (FRBR = Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records formulated by the International Federation of Library Associations - IFLA, in 1998)

RDA will provide a set of guidelines and instructions on formulating descriptive data and access point control data to support resource discovery. Being developed as a web-based product RDA is especially designed for description and access for digital resources.

Where AACR2 is an arrangement of rules based on the format of the item described, the focus of RDA is to be a standard for describing content rather than a display standard. The terminology of AACR2 is being revised, but many of the concepts are being retained. For example, instead of "heading," RDA might use "access point." The concept of "main entry," becomes "primary access point." "Uniform title" will be retained as "preferred title."

To pursue global sharing of information resources RDA is being developed in line with a set of objectives and principles which are based on the IME ICC (IFLA Meeting of Experts on an International Cataloging Code) draft Statement of International cataloguing principles.

There are three parts in the Resource Description and Access cataloguing rules. The first part will relate to descriptive cataloguing, and will outline general rules for description of an item. This will be followed by the supplementary rules for specific formats.

An important feature of RDA will be its independence from the presentation of data. It will provide guidance on the recording of data, the content, and not on how it might be organized on the screen. That means that RDA-based cataloguing can be readily accommodated in many other than MARC encoding standards and metadata schema, thus

intended to be independent of any cataloguing code. As a result, the more user-friendly presentations of bibliographic data can be introduced.

Another difference is in the format of general material designations. (GMD). The RDA will allow, as for a proposal, for a two-part GMD which might be called “type and form of resource”. The first part will describe the content and the second part will describe the carrier or the physical format. For example, a map or atlas on CD-ROM will be assigned the GMD of [cartographic resource: digital]. Music CD might have GMD [music recording: CD audio], and videocassette – [moving image: video VHS].

Part II will cover description of bibliographic relationships, which will allow bibliographic records to express the relationships described in Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records. FRBR supports user tasks showing what tasks the user of a catalogue is to be able to accomplish:

Find information that is similar to the user’s search criteria

Identify information user wants and eliminate information or entities user does not want

Select a particular entity appropriate to user’s needs

Obtain it through loan or remotely.

FRBR comprises 3 groups of entities that key objects of interest to the users of bibliographic information :

Group 1 represents intellectual or artistic products: Work, Expression, Manifestation , and Item.

Group 2 entities are responsible for the intellectual or artistic content: Person and Corporate body. (responsibility relationships)

Group 3 entities are subjects of Group 1 or Group 2’s intellectual endeavor, and include Concepts, Objects, Events, and Places.

As for the FRBR model:

Work is a “distinct intellectual or artistic creation.” (IFLA 1998)

Expression is “the specific intellectual or artistic form that a work takes each time it is “realized.” (IFLA 1998)

Manifestation is “the physical embodiment of an expression of a work. As an entity, manifestation represents all the physical objects that bear the same characteristics, in respect to both intellectual content and physical form.” (IFLA 1998)

Item is “a single exemplar of a manifestation. The entity defined as item is a concrete entity.” (IFLA 1998)

Work --- is realized through the Expression --- is embodied in Manifestation --- is exemplified by the Item.

FRBR ideas is a very important development and an effort towards global sharing of information.

FRBR outlines the relationship between many different interpretations or expressions of the work. Each expression can be published in various formats or manifestations. Each manifestation may be reproduced many times, each of which is called an item.

Thus, FRBR is a conceptual entity-relationship model. (ER-model)

RDA will outline rules for describing relationships between items according to FRBR.

Another new section of RDA includes authority control, which will also take into consideration Functional Requirements for Authority Records. At present AACR2 do not outline the creation of the authority file. RDA authority rules might be called Access Point Control and will provide general guidelines for access points (preferred forms and variants) for Group 1 and Group 2 FRBR entities: persons, places, families, corporate bodies, works, expressions, etc, as well as others information used in access point control (entity identifiers, sources, etc.)

Mapping of RDA data elements to MARC data elements was tested and in future cataloguers might need to add to their records MARC fields which are not frequently used at present, e.g. 340 Physical medium or 352 Digital Graphic representation, others. Some MARC fields have to be revised for FRBRised records.

The application of new rules in OPACs, the implementation of FRBR description will require a new type of presentation in OPACs. The FRBR display should contain a sort of a folder or hyper-link for each work which can be clicked to reveal the available expressions, each expression can be clicked to reveal the manifestation held by the library.

The impact of the new rules to the cataloguing process - more work, new skill and challenges for cataloguers. To accurately describe the relationship between different expressions of the work cataloguers will have to perform careful examination of what they catalogue, to research national catalogue, and to include details which were optional previously. Also, to establish relationships of new items to the items which are already in the catalogue, the update of bibliographic records of the existing items will be needed.

Another trend that will keep cataloguers busy in coming years is fast changing characteristics of information environment. The explosive growth of digital repositories, increased the need for data management and intensified the interest to metadata in various communities: government, education, scientific, business, art etc. Extensive development of metadata schemes followed. There exist hundreds of metadata schemes. I happened to come across a very useful definition of this widely used word "schema": "A set of rules for encoding information that supports specific communities of users" (Tony Gill, Anne J. Gilliland, Mary S. Woodley : Introduction to metadata)

Thus, modern cataloguer has to be able to understand the range of metadata schemes developed for information resources, identify objectives, aims and goals of the schemes, their functional emphasis, analyze of how they fit into information context, select appropriate metadata schema, create, extract and manipulate metadata.

Changes in user environments and user demand for the new types of information in bibliographic records show the necessity to enhance MARC records. It can be achieved by inclusion of media metadata into the bibliographic records, such as audio visual materials, book covers, reader reviews and book summaries, links to other resources, table of contents data, and other external metadata on the Web.

Once again I'd like to stress the importance of the quality in recorded data and a growing need for professional creators of the bibliographic records. Professionally developed and maintained catalogue will save time and efforts of the users in successful search results and provide organized access to quality information.

To summarize current and emerging trends in cataloguing:

- Importance of workforce planning taking into consideration
 - Retirement and difficulty to find trained staff
- Increasing complexity of the cataloguing process as a result of
 - The increasing number of online tools for cataloguers
 - Rapid emergence of new formats
 - Emphasis to indexing and metadata
 - Cataloguing for diverse user environments and audiences.
- Growing need to provide multilingual cataloguing
- Increased rate of updates to cataloguing rules, subject headings and MARC21.
- New type of presentation in OPACs prompted by
 - the changes in user environments - cataloguers will need to include additional feature into the bibliographic record, such as book cover art, reader reviews, book summaries, etc.
 - application of new cataloguing rules in OPACs – cataloguers will need to create links between the related records in the database, the expressions and manifestations of the work.

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