

CATALOGING: Ticket to the Past, the Present, and the Future

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Past

- 15th century
 - > circa 1450 – invention of printing press in Germany
 - > bibliographies
- 16th – 19th centuries
 - > inventories
 - > finding lists
 - > collocation devices

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Past (cont.)

- 20th century
 - > codification
 - > catalog formats
 - card, book, COM, online
 - > technology
 - microform
 - computer
 - the Internet, the Web

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21st Century Misconceptions

- Print materials will disappear, and search engines will provide access to electronic information.
- Libraries no longer need catalogers, and library schools no longer need to teach cataloging.
- AACR2 is too detailed, and simpler methods need to be created.
- We don't need subject headings – keyword searching is sufficient.

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Misconception 1

- Print materials will disappear, and search engines will provide access to electronic information.

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Print vs. Electronic Resources

- Technology is changing so rapidly that electronic documents from five or more years ago are largely unreadable.
- Older electronic documents are deteriorating rapidly.
- Those in the know say that the only solution currently to preserve for posterity is to print multiple copies on acid-free paper or standard quality microfilm, distribute the copies to a number of libraries, and to catalog them (on acid-free paper?!)

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Problems with Organizing Web Resources

- The majority of Web resources are like the print ephemera that papers the earth – advertising flyers under windshield wipers, sales catalogs filling mailboxes, milk and cereal cartons filling landfills.
- Web resources are not static, information in them can change (and frequently does), and addresses are not stable.
- Libraries do not own or maintain the resources for which they have contracted access rights, but search engines cannot provide access to such resources.

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Print is not disappearing

- Books are still being published – over 50,000 last year just in this country.
- Copyright is not going away – it is human nature to want to own one's intellectual property.
- Kids growing up with computers are supposed to become comfortable reading narrative online – how many kids would have read Harry Potter online, do you think?
- Books must be reviewed by editors, reviewers, and library professionals before being made available in a library, vs. anyone being able to mount anything on the Web.

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Misconception 2

- Libraries no longer need catalogers, and library schools no longer need to teach cataloging.

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Need for Catalogers

- Libraries have three assets: collections, staff, and the architecture of bibliographic control – like a three-legged stool.
- Someone has to provide the architecture of bibliographic control.
- Job ads – 166 ads for jobs requiring cataloging knowledge appeared in 151 days from just one source.

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Need for Cataloging Education

- Lack of understanding of the architecture of bibliographic control is a problem for reference librarians, collection development librarians, preservation librarians, and almost every other kind of librarian.
- Even the library's webmaster has to understand how to organize information, or no one will be able to use the library's intranet.

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Misconception 3

- AACR2 is too detailed, and simpler methods need to be created.

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AACR2 – unappreciated standard

- AACR2 is the de facto standard in all English-speaking countries and in many others as well.
- There's nothing in the Dublin Core that cannot be fit into the ISBD.
- The 8 areas of the ISBD (upon which AACR2 is based) can be used to describe anything.

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Using ISBD to Catalog Anything

Calli [realia] : beloved pet / raised and loved by Arlene Taylor, Debbie Dowell, and Jon Dowell. – Final ed. / overseen by a Higher Power. – Tabby. – Manhasset, N.Y. : Community Church Manse, 1992.

1 cat : male, black and white, 15 lbs. ; 62 cm., in casket 20 x 36 x 12 cm. + 1 collar (red ; 10 in.). – (Taylor cat series ; no. 3)

Original title: Callimachus.
Earlier version published: Durham, N.C. : SPCA, 1979.
ISCN: 101-01-0101 : priceless : available in the next life

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AACR2 – too sophisticated?

- It's fascinating to watch all the metadata schemes developing (i.e., the wheel being reinvented)
 - they start with description (as did library cataloging centuries ago)
 - gradually more elements and more detail are added
- Are the Dublin Core and other metadata schemes better? Or just less sophisticated?

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AACR2 – the only metadata scheme with attention to authority control

- Names by which people are identified frequently vary.
- Different people frequently have the same names.
- Names of corporate bodies frequently are represented by shortened forms, acronyms, etc.
- Names by which representations, translations, editions, etc., of a work frequently vary.

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Misconception 4

- We don't need subject headings – keyword searching is sufficient.

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Subject Heading Research Questions

- What proportions of terms (words or phrases) used by catalog users appear in subject headings in the records that are retrieved?
- What proportions of records retrieved have the keywords *only* in a subject heading field?

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Ongoing Study

- One week's worth of keyword searches from a small academic library
- Arranged in alphabetical order
- We've only done part of the A's! (approx. 120)
- We recreate the search in PittCat
- We limit the language to English, and search only the University Library System (Pittsburgh campus), Health Sciences Library and Law Library catalogs

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Ongoing Study (cont.)

- We record number of hits for recreated search.
- We then do a second search to discover how many hits have the term(s) in a subject field but not in the title.
- We have to look at individual records in the second search to determine how many also do not have the term(s) anywhere else in the record besides in a subject field.

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Sample record with keywords in title and subject

Title: America's experiment with capital punishment: reflections on the past, present, and future of the ultimate penal sanction / edited by James F. Acker, Robert M. Bohm, Charles S. Luman.

Contributors: Acker, James F., 1951-
Bohm, Robert M.
Luman, Charles S., 1950-

Published: Durham, N.C. : Carolina Academic Press, c1998.

ISBN: 0890194518 (pbk.)

Physical Description: vi, 586 p. : 23 cm.

LC Subject Heading(s) (limits do not apply): Capital punishment--United States.

Note: Includes bibliographical references.

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Sample record with keywords in notes and subject

Title: Punishment and the death penalty: the current debate / edited by Robert M. Bohm and Robert E. Remberger.

Contributors: Bohm, Robert M., 1951-
Remberger, Robert E.

Published: Ardsley, N.Y. : Transaction Books, 1995.

Series: Contemporary issues
Contemporary issues in law, 111 f.

ISBN: 0761918411 (pbk. and free paper)

Physical Description: 266 p. : 23 cm.

LC Subject Heading(s) (limits do not apply): Capital punishment--United States.
Punishment--United States.

Note: Includes bibliographical references (p. 257-259).

Contents: Punishment / J.D. Malsatt
Two concepts of rule / John Rawls
Theory and punishment / Carl Menckhoff
Punishment in education / Richard M. Gendron
Punishment and punishment / Herbert Marcuse
Playing the rule / Richard Dwyer
Punishment of the innocent / Michael L. Rabin, Hugo Allen Brady, & Charles E. Fritson
A general history of capital punishment in America / Information File

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Sample record with keywords in subject field only

Title: Courting death: the law of mortality / edited by Desmond Manderson.

Contributors: Manderson, Desmond.

Published: London : Sterling, Va. : Pluto Press, 1999.

Series: Law and social theory

ISBN: 0745313983 (pbk.)

Physical Description: viii, 278 p. : 23 cm.

LC Subject Heading(s) (limits do not apply): Death--Law and status, laws, etc.
Death.
Capital punishment.
Existence.
Death--Justice (Law).

Note: Includes bibliographical references and index.

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Very preliminary results

- About 31% of records retrieved have the keywords only in a subject field – includes one-word searches, e.g.
 - > accounting
 - > adoption
 - > advertising
- About 35% of records retrieved for searches with 2 or more words have the keywords only in a subject field.

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Individual Keyword Searches

There are many individual searches where high percentages of the retrievals have the keywords only in a subject field:

Search	# recs	# in		% in
	retrieved	s.h. only	s.h. only	
abortion teenagers	3	3		100 %
afro american children language	18	17		94 %
advertising layout typography	19	17		90 %
aeronautical instruments	70	62		88 %
abortion birth control	142	111		78 %
air pollution	2645	1620		61 %

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More of the Picture

- For about 40% of searches, the percentage of retrieved records with the terms only in subject fields is greater than 50%.
- So for 4 of every 10 keyword searches, half or more of the retrieved results would not be retrieved if catalogers had not provided the added value of subject headings to the records.

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Misconceptions no more!

- I'd say these four misconceptions can be reconceived:
 - Print materials will not disappear in the near future, and search engines will only provide non-authority controlled access to some electronic information.
 - Libraries do need catalogers, and library schools do need to teach cataloging principles (by whatever name).
 - AACR2 is detailed, but is based on principles that are very adaptable.
 - We do need subject headings – keyword searching is not sufficient.

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Conclusion

- Should the Dublin Core or other metadata replace traditional cataloging?
- We may have to call it something other than "cataloging," but the basic principles of description and access are sound and need to be fought for!

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