

Catalogers Group, March 2, 2006, Minutes

Topic: BSTF Report

Present: Melissa Beck, Sharon Benamou, Valerie Bross, Claudia Horning, Chamya Kincy, Sara Layne (recorder) Silvia Mariscal, Caroline Miller, Nancy Norris, Roxanne Peck, Hao Phan, Paul Priebe, Louise Ratliff, John Riemer (presenter/moderator)

I. BSTF effect on catalogers and cataloging.

SOPAG question 4b on the BSTF report asks for responses on three different options for system architecture: A single file of bibliographic records (77% of items in the UC system are owned by more than one UC); a single ILS; or using OCLC as the database of record for the UCs.

SOPAG question 4a on the BSTF report asks for responses on three different options for re-architecting cataloging: More coordination; consolidation into one or two centers, or more outsourcing.

Concerns expressed regarding 4 b:

- What about local notes getting lost? Could use subfield 5 and protect fields with that subfield; add more information to holdings records and index it; make it policy to protect local information
- Obstacles to a single ILS include different accounting on the different campuses; would need to go through RFI, RFP to agree on a single ILS and implement it. Maybe go with a shared file first?
- Pointing to OCLC (as the database of record) has a number of problems—audit trails—local ILS wouldn't go away—also the problem of preserving local notes would be worse—however, it might be possible to use OCLC as our bibliographic utility (e.g., not use RLIN)—get automatic updates for changed records

Concerns expressed regarding 4a:

- Problems of logistics of consolidation option—defeats the object of getting materials cataloged and on the shelf rapidly
- Problems of balancing priorities and treating all campuses fairly
- ARL rankings might suffer if campuses no longer had cataloging (and acquisitions) staff
- How would catalog maintenance be dealt with?

- Catalogers would no longer be available on campuses to work on projects, consult with colleagues and faculty, etc.

Concern expressed about the membership of the BSTF—with the increase in access to digital collections, are catalogers seen as the source of metadata? We need to put ourselves forward.

II. Why emulate Google and Amazon? What can we do better than they can?

- We are a research institution—we shouldn't focus on the lowest common denominator
- Dangerous to measure just circulation (for relevance rankings)—need to count in-house use as well
- BSTF does not appear to recognize a distinction between public and research libraries; also the emphasis in the report appears to be on undergraduates. The focus should be on faculty and graduate student needs—we should focus on scholarly research.
- Do not agree that Google/Amazon are “better” and that there is little that the catalog **could** do.
- Questioned assertion that “What is popular is also right.”
- It is the OPAC that isn't good, not the data.
- We should work more closely with vendors to develop a good system; we should combine the best features of **both** the catalog and Google.

III. What next?

SOPAG will collect answers from the campus groups; the ULs will decide early in June which recommendations to implement; then the BSTF will be asked to implement the recommendations.

Concern expressed: implementation should be assigned to a different group with fewer biases than the BSTF; assigning the BSTF to implementation represents a conflict of interest

General: agreement on the value of metadata; we need robust data for many reasons, including robust reports.