

# **“ON THE RECORD”**

**THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WORKING GROUP  
ON THE FUTURE OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONTROL**



**LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
SPRING ASSEMBLY 2008**

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# WHAT I'LL COVER

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- **The Charge**
- **The Process**
- **The Audience**
- **The Report**
  - Progenitors
  - Guiding Principles
  - Introduction and Background
  - Findings and Recommendations
- **What's Happened So Far?**
- **What's Next?**

# THE CHARGE

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- **Present findings on how bibliographic control and other descriptive practices can effectively support management of and access to library materials in the evolving information and technology environment;**
- **Recommend ways in which the library community can collectively move toward achieving this vision;**
- **Advise the Library of Congress on its role and priorities.**

# THE PROCESS

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- **Three public hearings, March–July 2007:**
  - **Three locations:**
    - ✦ **Google campus**
    - ✦ **ALA headquarters**
    - ✦ **Library of Congress**
  - **Three topics:**
    - ✦ **Users and uses of bibliographic data**
    - ✦ **Structures and standards for bibliographic control**
    - ✦ **Economics and organization of bibliographic control**
  - **Ca. 350 attendees**
  - **20 invited presentations**
  - **75 written testimonies, of which >15 were submitted on behalf of institutions**

# THE PROCESS

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- **Draft Report, November 2007**
  - Issued for public comment
  - Reviewed with LC management
  - Presented to LC staff
  - Webcast [!]
  - 135 pages of comment received
- **Final Report, January 2008**

<http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/news/lcwg-ontherecord-jan08-final.pdf>

# THE AUDIENCE

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- **The Library of Congress**
- **Other (current and potential) participants in the bibliographic sphere**
- **Policy makers and decision makers who influence the scope of operations within organizations and who manage the (fiscal and other) constraints within which those operations take place**

# OTR: PROGENITORS

- **Brian E.C. Schottlaender, ed. *The Future of the Descriptive Cataloging Rules: Papers from the ALCTS Preconference, AACR 2000* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1998).**
- ***LC21: A Digital Strategy for the Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000).**
- ***Bibliographic Control of Web Resources: A Library of Congress Action Plan* (2001). <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/bibcontrol/actionplan.html>**
- **Wayne Jones et al., eds. *Cataloging the Web: Metadata, AACR, and MARC 21* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2002).**
- **University of California Bibliographic Services Task Force. *Rethinking How We Provide Bibliographic Services for the University* (December 2005). <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/sopag/BSTF/Final.pdf>**
- **Karen Calhoun. *The Changing Nature of the Catalog and Its Integration with Other Discovery Tools* (March, 2006). <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/calhoun-report-final.pdf>**
- **Jackie Byrd et al. *A White Paper on the Future of Cataloging at Indiana University* (2006). [http://www.iub.edu/~libtserv/pub/Future\\_of\\_Cataloging\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.iub.edu/~libtserv/pub/Future_of_Cataloging_White_Paper.pdf)**

# OTR: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- **REDEFINE BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONTROL**

“ ... a broad definition of bibliographic control that embraces all library materials, a diverse community of users, and a multiplicity of venues where information is sought ... view bibliographic control as a distributed activity, not a centralized one.”

- **REDEFINE THE BIBLIOGRAPHIC UNIVERSE**

“Libraries of today need to recognize that they are but one group of players in a vast field, and that market conditions necessitate that libraries interact increasingly with the commercial sector ... Rather than relying as heavily as it has on LC, the community needs to acknowledge that in at least some areas, LC may need to be able to rely on the work of others.”

- **REDEFINE THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

“ ... identify areas wherein it [LC] no longer need be the sole provider of bibliographic data and to create partnerships to distribute responsibility for data creation ... consider sharing the standards effort within the community and collaborating with other interested institutions to create a rational and efficient means of managing the standards needed for information exchange.”

# THE ECONOMIC AXIOM

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## SUNK COSTS ARE BYGONES

- **The amount of money, time, trouble, or lives already sunk into a particular endeavor is not a valid argument for continuing the expenditure associated with that endeavor.**
- **Valid arguments are those that expound the future benefits associated with continuing the expenditure.**

# OTR: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- **“The future of bibliographic control will be collaborative, decentralized, international in scope, and Web-based.”**
- **“Libraries must continue the transition to this future without delay in order to retain their significance as information providers.”**
- **“The library community must look beyond individual libraries and toward a systemwide deployment of resources.”**

# OTR: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Increase the Efficiency of Bibliographic Record Production and Maintenance**  
“Because the incredible growth in information resources is not matched by a related growth in library funding, it is necessary to re-examine the efficiency with which the work of bibliographic control is performed.”
- 2. Enhance Access to Rare, Unique, and Other Special Hidden Materials**  
“Processing has never kept up with the acquisition of unique and primary source materials. As a result, there are backlogs of unprocessed collections of these materials at libraries and repositories across the country that are not accessible through the libraries’ online discovery tools.”
- 3. Position our Technology for the Future**  
“Data that are stored in separate library databases often do not disclose themselves to Web applications, and thus do not appear in searches carried out through commonly used search engines. Such data are therefore invisible to information seekers using these Web applications, even though a library’s catalog may itself be openly available for use on the Web.”
- 4. Position our Community for the Future**  
“Libraries have tended to equate bibliographic control with the production of metadata for use solely within the library catalog. This narrow focus is no longer suitable in an environment wherein data from diverse sources are used to create new and interesting information views.”
- 5. Strengthen the Library and Information Science Profession**  
“As in so many things, education will prove key to the profession’s capability to address new challenges in bibliographic control.”

# OTR: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## Ten Subsections Comprising More Than 100 Individual Recommendations

1. **Increase the Efficiency of Bibliographic Record Production and Maintenance**
  1. ***Eliminate Redundancies***
  2. ***Increase Distribution of Responsibility for Bibliographic Record Production and Maintenance***
  3. ***Collaborate on Authority Record Creation and Maintenance***
2. **Enhance Access to Rare, Unique, and Other Special Hidden Materials**
3. **Position our Technology for the Future**
  1. ***The Web as Infrastructure***
  2. ***Standards***
4. **Position our Community for the Future**
  1. ***Design for Today's and Tomorrow's User***
  2. ***Realization of FRBR***
  3. ***Optimize LCSH for Use and Reuse***
5. **Strengthen the Library and Information Science Profession**
  1. ***Build an Evidence Base***
  2. ***Design LIS Education for Present and Future Needs***

# IN SUMMARY

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- **Report presents a vision and broad directions for the future**
- **It is not a specific implementation plan**
- **A call to action**

# DEANNA MARCUM'S PRELIMINARY VIEW

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- **Expected**
  - Streamline processes
  - Collaborate more
  - Be more flexible about accepting bibliographic data from diverse sources
  - Share responsibilities more broadly and more meaningfully
  
- **New**
  - Increase incentives for sharing bibliographic data
  - Examine economic models
  - Internationalize authority files
  
- **Controversial**
  - Give priority to “hidden” special collections
  - Develop standards with focus on Return On Investment
  - Develop a more flexible, extensible metadata carrier (than MARC)
  - Suspend work on RDA

# CONTROVERSIAL RECOMMENDATIONS - 1

## 3.1.1. **Develop a More Flexible, Extensible Metadata Carrier**

1. **LC: Recognizing that Z39.2/MARC are no longer fit for the purpose, work with the library and other interested communities to specify and implement a carrier for bibliographic information that is capable of representing the full range of data of interest to libraries, and of facilitating the exchange of such data both within the library community and with related communities.**
2. **LC: Contribute resources to support the work of coordinating the definitions and linkages of data elements in nationally and internationally accepted bibliographic standards.**
3. **All: Work with vendors to raise awareness of the need to begin developing products that can accept input of data utilizing a variety of metadata formats.**

## 4.3. **Optimize LCSH for Use and Reuse**

1. **LC: Transform LCSH**
2. **LC: Pursue de-coupling of subject strings**
3. **LC: Encourage application of, and cross-referencing with, other controlled subject vocabularies**
4. **LC: Recognize the potential of computational indexing in the practice of subject analysis**

# CONTROVERSIAL RECOMMENDATIONS - 2

## 3.2.5. **Suspend Work on RDA**

1. **JSC: Suspend further new developmental work on RDA until:**
  - a) the use and business cases for moving to RDA have been satisfactorily articulated,
  - b) the presumed benefits of RDA have been convincingly demonstrated, and
  - c) more, large-scale, comprehensive testing of FRBR as it relates to proposed provisions of RDA has been carried out against real cataloging data, and the results of those tests have been analyzed (see 4.2.1 below).
1. **JSC: Utilize the time afforded by the previous recommendation to revisit work already completed in light of the criticisms and concerns described above. Actions undertaken should include, but not necessarily be limited to: addressing issues of readability, including language, formatting of examples, and navigation; reconsidering variance from ISBD organization and conventions, articulating the case for variances retained; addressing issues of ease of use, including navigation; and addressing concerns about usability, training, etc.**
2. **LC, JSC, and DCMI: Work jointly to specify and commission exploratory work to model and represent a Bibliographic Description Vocabulary, drawing on the work of FRBR and RDA, the Dublin Core Abstract Model, and appropriate semantic Web technologies (e.g., SKOS). Some preparation for this work has already been done in joint discussion of JSC and DCMI.**

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL OF US - 1

## **BIBLIOGRAPHIC EFFICIENCY**

- 1.1.1.1. All: **Be more flexible in accepting bibliographic data from others** (e.g., publishers, foreign libraries) that do not conform precisely to U.S. library standards.
- 1.1.2.2. All: **Use metadata supplied by** sound recording, motion picture, and **other audio-visual distribution sources.**
- 1.1.2.3. All: **Use descriptive cataloging provided by book vendors and non-U.S. libraries** whenever available.
- 1.1.5.1. All: Make **use of existing, and gather additional, evidence on user behavior** to establish empirically the correlation between user behavior and the content of bibliographic records.
- 1.2.1.1. LC, library and publishing communities: **Share responsibility for creating original cataloging** according to interest, use, and ability. Consider categories of materials for which responsibilities can be distributed and categories of metadata that can be appropriately provided by each of the participants.
- 1.2.2.2. LC: For those aspects of operations that extend beyond the Library's immediate mission as the Library of Congress, **identify other entities or groups with the interest and ability to assume responsibility** for them.
- 1.2.3. PCC: **Expand** number of PCC participants
- 1.3.1. LC, PCC, All: **Increase collaboration on authority data**

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL OF US - 2

### **RARE AND HIDDEN MATERIALS**

- 2.1.1.1. All: Direct resources to support the discovery of these materials, including resources freed by economies realized in other areas.**
- 2.1.1.2. All: Gather and share data on access paths that guide researchers to unique materials as a means to inform best practices for access in a Web environment.**
- 2.1.1.3. All: Make finding aids accessible via online catalogs and available on the Internet.**
- 2.1.2.1. All: Adopt as a guiding principle that some level of access must be provided to all materials as a first step to comprehensive access, as appropriate. Allow for different cataloging levels depending on the types of documents, their nature, and richness.**
- 2.1.2.2. All: Establish cataloging practices that are practicable and flexible, and that reflect the needs of users and the reality of limited resources.**

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL OF US - 3

- 2.1.2.4. All: Consider **different levels of cataloging and processing** for all types of rare and unique materials, depending on institutional priorities and importance and potential use of materials, while still following national standards and practices.
- 2.1.3.1. All: **Integrate access tools** (finding aids, metadata records, databases, authority files, etc.) for unique and rare materials into the information access structures that serve the institution as a whole.
- 2.1.4.2. All: **Study usage patterns** to inform digitization priorities.
- 2.1.5.1. All: Encourage **inter-institutional collaboration** for sharing metadata records and authority records for rare and unique materials.
- 2.1.5.2. All: Encourage libraries and archives to **submit records** for rare and unique materials **to shared databases** such as OCLC.

## TECHNOLOGY

- 3.1.1.3. All: Work with vendors to raise awareness of the need to begin developing **products that can accept input** of data utilizing a variety of metadata formats.
- 3.1.3.2. All: Work to include standard identifiers for individual data elements in bibliographic records, both prospectively and retrospectively, wherever such identifiers are defined, and work to identify changes in metadata carrier standards necessary to incorporate and use such identifiers.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL OF US - 4

## COMMUNITY

- 4.1.1.1. All: Encourage and support development of systems capable of **relating evaluative data**, such as reviews and ratings, to bibliographic records.
- 4.1.1.2. All: Encourage the enhancement of library systems to provide the capability to link to appropriate **user-added data** available via the Internet (e.g., Amazon.com, LibraryThing, Wikipedia).
- 4.1.2.1. All: Develop library systems that can **accept user input and other non-library data** without interfering with the integrity of library-created data.
- 4.1.3.1. All: Make use of holdings and circulation information to **point users to items** that are most used and that may potentially be of most interest.
- 4.3.3.2. All: Make **use of any systems of controlled subject headings** that are appropriate to augment subject access for one's collections and users.

## EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

- 5.1.2.1. All: Encourage **ongoing qualitative and quantitative research** (and its publication) about bibliographic control, for various types of libraries and over a protracted period of time.
- 5.1.2.2. All: Through library and information science (LIS) and continuing education, **foster a greater understanding of the need for research**, both quantitative and qualitative, into issues of bibliographic control.
- 5.1.2.3. All: Work to develop a stronger and more rigorous culture of formal **evaluation, critique, and validation**, and build a cumulative research agenda and evidence base. Encourage, highlight, reward, and share best research practices and results.
- 5.1.2.4. All: Promote **collaboration** among academics, the practicing library community, and related communities, as appropriate, **in the development of research agendas** and research design, in order to assess research needs, profit from diverse perspectives, and foster acceptance from the broader information community.
- 5.1.2.5. All: Improve mechanisms to **publicize and distribute** research efforts and results.

# WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR

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- **Working Group members are “making the rounds.”**
- **Working Group has been asked, and has agreed, to continue as an Advisory Group.**
- **LC has committed to responding in writing to the report in time for the ALA Annual Conference.**
  - **Three separate groups within LC are reviewing the report.**
- **An ALCTS group is reviewing and will respond to the report.**
- **Thomas Mann has published a response on behalf of the Library of Congress Professional Guild (see “On the Record’ but Off the Track” at <http://www.guild2910.org/WorkingGrpResponse2008.pdf>)**
- **Some things are already underway in test or pilot mode.**
- **CoP and JSC intend to continue developing RDA.**
- **LC, NAL, and NLM have issued joint statement on RDA.**
- **LC’s Cataloging Policy and Support Office has issued decisions regarding LCSH (see [http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/pre\\_vs\\_post.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/pre_vs_post.pdf))**

# LC, NAL, AND NLM ON RDA

**“... When the Library of Congress issues its response [in June], we will be focusing on how it will position itself to work in this new, networked, and collaborative environment, not simply on single recommendations. We recognize that any cataloging code (AACR2 or the proposed Resource Description and Access--RDA) is but a part of this environment.**

**It may seem counterintuitive that we issue a joint statement with our colleagues from the National Agricultural Library and the National Library of Medicine on RDA before we issue a full response to *On the Record*, but we do so because the international Joint Steering Committee and the Committee of Principals continue their work, and because so many librarians are asking about the national libraries' plans to implement the proposed code.**

**... We ask that you bear in mind that it is the entire bibliographic system that needs to be considered and reworked, and the cataloging code is only one small piece of the work that lies ahead.**

**... Colleagues from NLM and NAL are most concerned that a systematic review of RDA has not yet been possible and, given the potential magnitude and broad impact of the changes, such a review is essential.**

**... [Therefore] The three national libraries [have] agreed on the following approach: First, we jointly commit to further development and completion of RDA. Second, following its completion, a decision to implement the rules will be based upon the positive evaluation of RDA's utility within the library and information environment, and criteria reflecting the technical, operational, and financial implications of the new code. This will include an articulation of the business case for RDA, including benefits to libraries and end users and cost analyses for retraining staff and re-engineering cataloging processes ...”**

## **SCHOTTLAENDER ON MANN**

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- **He is a man with an agenda, and that agenda (mis)informs his reading of the report.**
- **He is a very “either/or” thinker.**
- **He appears to think there are only two “players” in the information ecosystem: libraries and end users.**
- **He either has a very rudimentary understanding of, and a very narrow view of, Web technology.**
- **He confuses cataloging with subject analysis.**
- **He is obsessed with subject analysis, generally, and LCSH, specifically.**
- **He is obsessed with the codex.**
- **He misconstrues the report’s recommendations regarding special and hidden collections.**

## WHAT'S NEXT?

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- **Some of what comes next is up to others, but they need our support and encouragement.**
- **Some of what comes next is up to us. We can make a difference, though we may need to change roles, outlooks, expectations, processes, and organizations.**