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Program Report: *Cataloger's Desktop* Training at the Library of Congress

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What better place to attend training in the use of *Cataloger's Desktop* than on-site at the Library of Congress (LC)? After all, it is the organization responsible for giving us this essential tool. And who better to deliver the training than Bruce Johnson, product manager? Talk about going right to the source! I know there was no place I would rather have been on the morning of July 29, 2009. In addition to thanking LC, I want to thank OBS for sponsoring this wonderful opportunity and Karen Selden for organizing it, along with the *Classification Web Training*.

Mr. Johnson titled the first part of his presentation "Fine Tuning *Cataloger's Desktop*: Tips for Making These Tools Your Own!" The tips and the accompanying demo were very helpful. What is *Cataloger's Desktop*? It is a web-accessible, fee-for-service subscription product for catalogers that can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and provides the most widely-used cataloging documentation resources in an integrated, online system. It contained 279 resources the day of the training, but that number is constantly increasing so it may be higher by the time you read this. It is updated quarterly and a free thirty-day trial is available for non-subscribers to test drive it.

The wealth of cataloging resources available in *Cataloger's Desktop* can be a negative at times. Talk about information overload! The key to managing this is to click on the Preferences tab and check the boxes next to the resources you will consult most frequently. These settings are saved and attached to your email address, so you can apply them anywhere you search *Cataloger's Desktop*. Clicking on Categories under the Browse tab helps to further narrow the resources to be searched and it is simple to revert to the entire list of resources at any time (Reset/Use Full Site).

Random tips that stuck with me:

- Control/F brings up the Find box, which is also always available in upper right corner
- Search Tips & Search History link in Find box is useful
- Hits are arranged by order within the resource, not by relevancy
- In the Words Around Hits option, choosing the Short radio button reorders hits in context
- Phrase searches must utilize quotation marks
- All reference links in the hierarchy at the top of the results pane on the right are hot links that can be clicked on

"*Cataloger's Desktop* 3.0: The Next Generation: A First Look" was Mr. Johnson's title for the second part of this session. This new version is due to be released on November 1, 2009. The technology running the current product is maxed out. Mr. Johnson mentioned more than once that the 3.0 version will be noticeably faster, a fact that has been verified by the 45 testers of 3.0 at LC and elsewhere. The interface will have a cleaner look and preferences will be enhanced. Searching will be updated to allow for fuzzy matching and the ability to capitalize on your previous search behavior. Resources that are commonly known by acronyms will be easier to locate in the long alphabetical list since those acronyms will appear at the start of the title.

New features include:

- Subscriber-customizable interface
- Incorporation of RSS feeds to stay current
- Persistent URLs to facilitate linking
- Drag and drop shortcuts to your computer's desktop
- Federated searching of database resources like the LC catalog

Yet Mr. Johnson assured us that we will not lose what we are used to! As a jaded veteran used to dealing with ILS (integrated library system) vendors who never seem to make the changes we really want, I find it refreshing to interact with LC (and specifically, Mr. Johnson) in its role as the vendor that provides access to *Cataloger's Desktop*. It is obvious that LC values the feedback of catalogers using this product, because such feedback often finds its way into *Desktop*—and very quickly at times. Mr. Johnson invited all in attendance to contribute our ideas to LC. This open solicitation of suggestions for improvements appears in many other venues as well. LC's responsiveness to the needs of catalogers is especially important as we face the Fall 2010 implementation of *RDA (Resource Description & Access)* which is designed for optimal use in electronic format.

I have been using *Cataloger's Desktop* for close to five years now. Why did I attend this training session? Because I had never had the chance to attend any training like this before. Whenever I am stumbling around in *Desktop*, I wonder why

I can never seem to carve out the time to teach myself. Also I am a member of the boomer generation and prefer to be *formally* trained when possible. Even the smallest little bit of advice that stays with me justifies my time investment. Not to mention the fact that I was there in DC for the AALL conference and the training was free. All signs were pointing in the right direction! I have already instituted some of the tips from this session, thereby improving my ability to use *Cataloger's Desktop* more efficiently and effectively.

Handouts URLs: <http://www.aallnet.org/sis/obssis/meetings/2009/LCtraining.htm>

Information (including FAQs): <http://www.loc.gov/cds/desktop>

Free Trial: <http://www.loc.gov/cds/desktop/OrderForm.html>

Logon Access for Subscribers: <http://desktop.loc.gov/>
