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Program Report

Energize Your Catalog! Get Electronic Titles Out of Their Silos and into Your OPAC

*Reported by
Ellen McGrath
University at Buffalo*

Coordinator and moderator: Mary Ann Hyatt (University of Oregon); speakers: Mary Jane Kelsey (Yale) and Ilona Tsutsui (University of Oregon).

Mary Ann Hyatt introduced this program by making the point that we spend a lot of money on our library catalogs. And the more titles we put in our catalog, the more relevant it becomes. After all, our users want one-stop shopping, so we should give it to them in the catalog-- right? Hey, I'm convinced, but then I'm a cataloger ☺

Mary Jane Kelsey opened her presentation with a challenge to us to focus on our vision of our catalog. She mentioned the redundancy that often exists between data in the OPAC and in web A-Z lists, which present our users with multiple ways to reach the same resource. Yet it is no longer possible to choose an either/or type of approach. We must cover all the bases in order to best serve our users. This OPAC approach raises a number of issues that must be considered:

- How to handle the links—integrate into print records or create separate records?
- Do you want to distinguish media at a browse level in the OPAC?
- Bib display—one record for each media type?
- How to get bib records for e-resource?
- Do you need electronic resources management software?

This slide from Ms. Kelsey's presentation summarized the issues that were covered in this program quite nicely. She focused on each of the questions individually and showed screen shots that illustrate how certain decisions about these issues played out in the catalog. For example, if you have plans for a faceted catalog, you will most likely need separate bibliographic records for the same print and electronic resource. This leads next to the question of whether you can create these separate records in-house or purchase them from a vendor. The latter route may be necessary if the number of records is high and your staff levels are low. But batch-loading MARC records from a vendor raises other important issues, such as record quality and maintenance/overlay complexities. And now that many of us have loaded these batches into our catalogs, along comes the vendor-neutral bibliographic record to replace these duplicate records representing the same electronic content.

Shifting gears slightly, Ms. Kelsey moved into a discussion of working with an electronic resource management (ERM) system. At Yale, they work with an ERM system and Serial Solutions coverage data. Coding decisions have changed over time, so the ERM gets updated to reflect those. Staff from many different departments are involved in keeping the ERM up to date, which is a time- and labor-intensive process. And if your vision of your catalog is of a portal, then you must also consider federated searching, open URL link resolvers, and content-sensitive linking.

Next up was Ms. Tsutsui, who provided some background on her law library, where they use the ERM system from Innovative Interfaces Inc. and Serial Solutions for coverage data. They utilize both shared and separate records for print and electronic resources. She characterized their goal as wanting to increase the visibility of their electronic resources. They mostly batch-

load vendor records, but sometimes records are also created in-house, one by one. Ms. Tsutsui focused on the specifics of using their ERM system effectively. She also discussed the use of MarcEdit to edit batch MARC records to include local data and emphasized the constant cycle of updates associated with keeping those records accurate and current. This requires a great deal of coordination with their main library and consortia catalogs in terms of timing and system capacity. The speaker closed with the observation that we are moving away from catalogs to search engines.

The handouts provided by Ms. Hyatt are interesting and useful: “Provision of user services by electronic legal publishers” and “Sample letter to vendor to request metasearch and linking services.” She implored us to tell our vendors to produce COUNTER-compliant usage statistics.

At many times throughout this year’s AALL conference, I felt like my head was spinning with all the different systems and acronyms and confusion about how they all relate to each other. This program helped me to realize that we are all in the same boat at least. And it was comforting to hear Ms. Kelsey encourage us to enjoy thinking about our OPAC and the exciting opportunity to focus on discovery and delivery!
