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A Century's Worth of Access: A Historical Overview of Cataloging in *Law Library Journal*

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A Century's Worth of Access: A Historical Overview of Cataloging in *Law Library Journal**

Ellen McGrath**

Ms. McGrath surveyed all articles dealing with the topic of cataloging that have appeared in the Law Library Journal since its inception in 1908. The articles have been categorized, placed in chronological order within each category, and briefly summarized.

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Introduction

¶1 A century is quite a long time. In terms of the cataloging content of *Law Library Journal (LLJ)*, a lot of ground has been covered from 1908 to 2013.¹ This time period has been marked by a number of changes in law cataloging, but it has also seen a number of themes that have remained constant. This article provides an overview of the articles about cataloging published in *LLJ* since its inception in 1908. Articles that focus only on classification have been omitted from this survey, although some of the articles included here do touch on classification along with more general cataloging topics. Articles have been grouped into categories and are listed in chronological order within each category. While there are additional articles about cataloging included in the proceedings of the annual meetings in *LLJ*, only those parts that are entered under a separate and specific title in the table of contents have been included.

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1. This survey covers a few more years than one hundred, however.

The Catalog

¶2 The first issue of *LLJ* in 1908 contained an article about the catalog.² This is appropriate given that the catalog had become an increasingly important gateway to the growing collections in law libraries. In the early years, the focus on the catalog was couched in terms of its necessity, collections having grown to a size where it was no longer possible for library staff to remember where everything was located.

¶3 The catalog has taken many forms over the years: book catalog,³ card (or index) catalog,⁴ computer output microfiche catalog,⁵ and online catalog. The topics of constructing and maintaining the catalog are therefore very popular. Concerns about the economics and efficiency of providing catalog access have been constant over the past century, just as they are today. The articles that deal with the catalog capture many of the mechanisms of the day, although many of the features have dropped by the wayside in our evolution away from the printed forms of the catalog towards the current online catalog. Discussion of the online catalog continues in the articles listed under the category of Automation.

Overview

¶4 Articles that treat cataloging from a general, or overview, perspective have been published in *LLJ*, though not so many in recent history. This is reflected in the titles of some of those early articles:

- A Primer on Law Library Cataloging (1936)
- Law Cataloging as a Specialized Field (1937)
- Contributions of the Columbia University Law School Library to the Field of Law Cataloging (1943)

¶5 Helen Moylan characterized her primer as “general and elementary.”⁶ It gave a textbook introduction to the numerous issues of concern to a law cataloger in 1936: catalog cards (including obtaining them, unit/main entry cards, filing them), authority control, latest entry for serials, and a list of subject headings (including variations for law libraries). The convenience of the user was stressed throughout

2. Gilson G. Glasier, *Cataloguing Law Books with Special Reference to Cooperative Indexing and Index Cards*, 1 *LAW LIBR. J.* 50–55 (1908).

3. See generally Betty W. Taylor, *Bibliographic Control and Guides to Historical Sources Part I—American Law Library Book Catalogs*, 69 *LAW LIBR. J.* 347 (1976).

4. See generally E.D. Adams, *Constructing a Catalogue*, 3 *LAW LIBR. J.* 35 (1911); J. Oscar Emrich, *Recent Experience in Cataloguing the Allegheny County Law Library, Pittsburg, Pa.*, 3 *LAW LIBR. J.* 41 (1911); C.H. Hastings, *Use of the Printed Cards of the Library of Congress by Law Libraries*, 4 *LAW LIBR. J.* 37 (1912); Thomas S. Dabagh, *The Law Library Catalog: Systematizing Entries Where Standard Headings Are Inadequate*, 23 *LAW LIBR. J.* 27 (1930); Mortimer Schwartz, *Dividing and Conquering the Card Catalog at Oklahoma*, 50 *LAW LIBR. J.* 129 (1957); Kathryn M. Hoover, *Vertical Files and Shelflists*, 74 *LAW LIBR. J.* 348 (1981); Lauren J. Pinsley, *Making the Card Catalog a More Vital Resource in the Academic Law Library*, 80 *LAW LIBR. J.* 447 (1988).

5. See generally Dennis Hyatt, *COM Catalog vs. Card Catalog: The Experience of the University of Oregon Law Library*, 71 *LAW LIBR. J.* 668 (1978).

6. Helen S. Moylan, *A Primer on Law Library Cataloging*, 29 *LAW LIBR. J.* 156, 156 (1936).

the article and the concluding bibliography listed resources on the desk of the law cataloger of that era.

¶6 Preparation for law cataloging was covered by Elsie Bassett in her 1937 article, in which she asserts that there will be cataloging in university libraries of both legal and nonlegal titles. “Cataloging is always a good preparation for other branches of library work and especially so in a law library.”⁷ She listed sources that law catalogers would find essential in the performance of their work. Subject headings and classification were treated broadly. Variation or customization was revisited, and the term *corner mark* was used.⁸ A corner mark is an addition to the upper-right corner of the catalog card, made to arrange jurisdictional uniform titles such as laws and statutes within the card catalog.

¶7 Before long, Bassett’s name was encountered again, this time as the author of *Cataloging Manual for Law Libraries*,⁹ published in 1942 and characterized as “the culmination of three years’ intensive work.”¹⁰ It was lauded as an invaluable tool, along with a number of other cataloging publications issued by the Columbia University Law School library staff.

¶8 Pauline Carleton described in great detail an institute on law cataloging that took place at Ohio State University College of Law in September 1951. “The sessions covered the following topics: choice of entry, subject headings, descriptive cataloging, classification and the treatment of non-book material which included simplified cataloging.”¹¹ Corner marks again received mention here, along with the underlining of pertinent words to facilitate the filing of catalog cards. “A basic point to bear in mind about cataloging is the necessity for consistency.”¹² The A.L.A. Cataloging Rules,¹³ published by the American Library Association, were quoted, along with examples of their application to specific legal titles. “Sound judgment on the part of catalogers”¹⁴ was mentioned in relation to the interpretation and application of the cataloging rules to “problems not specifically covered.”¹⁵ Adherence to the rules so as to provide the opportunity to benefit from the work of other libraries was also advocated. The concept of “history cards”¹⁶ for societies and institutions was mentioned briefly as being available from the Library of Congress. The article closed with a list of seven recommendations made at the institute, most of which focused on creating or updating lists to allow law catalogers to perform their work more accurately and efficiently.

¶9 Werner Ellinger’s 1962 comments on the basic problems of cataloging and classifying foreign legal materials still hold true today:

7. Elsie Bassett, *Law Cataloging as a Specialized Field*, 30 *LAW LIBR. J.* 499, 505 (1937).

8. *Id.*

9. ELSIE BASSETT, *A CATALOGING MANUAL FOR LAW LIBRARIES* (1942).

10. Alice Daspit Greenburg, *Contributions of the Columbia University Law School Library to the Field of Law Cataloging*, 36 *LAW LIBR. J.* 109, 110 (1943).

11. Pauline A. Carleton, *An Institute on Law Cataloging*, 45 *LAW LIBR. J.* 54, 54 (1952).

12. *Id.* at 56.

13. AM. LIBR. ASS’N, *A.L.A. CATALOGING RULES FOR AUTHOR AND TITLE ENTRIES*, (2d ed. 1949).

14. Carleton, *supra* note 11, at 58.

15. *Id.*

16. *Id.* at 62.

The problems we encounter are not so much problems of cataloging rules as of their proper application to materials written in a foreign technical language and requiring a knowledge of political facts with which the cataloger cannot be expected to be familiar. Most of these difficulties can be overcome by the knowledge and skillful use of reference tools and by keeping abreast of current events abroad.¹⁷

¶10 The description of providing access to the collection of the Sea Grant Law Program at the University at Buffalo in 1981 served as a model for dealing with such special collections.¹⁸ It began as a list of titles created on a word processor and then progressed to full cataloging and classification for most of the collection.

¶11 Sara Galligan's 1994 article focused on the cataloging of the collections of county law libraries in Minnesota provided by the Minnesota State Law Library.¹⁹ Perhaps there is no better endorsement of the importance of cataloging than for it to be mandated by state statute, as it was in this case.

¶12 Many, if not all, of the challenges documented in these articles still exist. But today law catalogers can consult resource tools and their colleagues much more quickly and easily via the Internet, e-mail, webinars, blogs, etc. There is no longer the need to wait for the next issue of *LLJ* or the annual meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), although those two channels of information sharing among law catalogers remain as valuable as ever, particularly in their ability to capture such information for historical purposes.

Administration

¶13 The November 1952 issue of *LLJ* published three articles on cataloging administration that had been presented at that year's AALL annual meeting. Miles O. Price addressed the hiring and training of law catalogers, an important topic given their scarcity. He began by defining the members of the staff of a typical, presumably academic, law library cataloging department: the head cataloger, junior catalogers, the shelf-lister, and the typist. He lamented the fact that "the demand for good catalogers at a reasonable salary has arisen so recently that there has been built up no reservoir of experienced law catalogers to draw upon."²⁰ To rectify this, he suggested that general catalogers be hired and then trained in the cataloging of law books. Since subject cataloging is the most difficult part of the process, he suggested that these generalists be drawn from the ranks of descriptive catalogers, because descriptive cataloging rules were "uniform and universal."²¹ Training for the general cataloger might include a course in legal bibliography as well as each of the first-year law classes.

¶14 Commentators disagreed with some of the basic tenets of Price's argument. Ellinger stated that general descriptive catalogers were unprepared to catalog law

17. Werner B. Ellinger, *Basic Problems of Cataloging and Classifying Foreign Legal Materials*, 55 *LAW LIBR. J.* 377, 378 (1962).

18. Linda Cohen, *Organizing and Accessing a Special Collection*, 74 *LAW LIBR. J.* 355 (1981).

19. Sara Galligan, *County Law Library Cataloging by the Minnesota State Law Library: A Ten Year Review*, 86 *LAW LIBR. J.* 529 (1994).

20. Miles O. Price, *Selection and Training of Law Catalogers*, 45 *LAW LIBR. J.* 296, 298 (1952).

21. *Id.* at 299.

titles, since “even the simplest and clearest rules will have to presuppose a familiarity with legal literature on the part of the cataloger.”²² Elizabeth Benyon observed that catalogers of all types were in short supply. “[F]or a number of years cataloging procedures have been in a state of flux because of the criticism of traditional techniques. This has proven to be discouraging to prospective catalogers.”²³ William B. Stern agreed with Ellinger about the law background needed for law cataloging and with Benyon about the general cataloger shortage.²⁴

¶15 In her article, “Simplified Cataloging,” Elizabeth Benyon set out “to provide an effective catalog through controls which keep the cost of its preparation and maintenance at a minimum.”²⁵ Although details of the methods by which cataloging is simplified may differ, the basic principles read as though they could have been written today. This statement is a perfect example: “In the face of ever-increasing acquisitions, dwindling budgets, acute space problems, and a somewhat limited supply of catalogers, simplification of cataloging techniques is inevitable.”²⁶ The commentators agreed in theory that simplified cataloging “is a necessity and a virtue,”²⁷ but they disagreed on the practical methods of achieving that goal. They are also not shy in expressing their opinions, as evidenced by Ellinger’s observation that “in the course of the history of simplified cataloging many simplifications had to be abandoned and the books treated had to be recataloged as [sic] much greater expense than if they had been cataloged in the regular way from the first.”²⁸

¶16 Centralized cataloging was the focus of the third article, written by Ellinger. He explored the feasibility of having it “all done in one place, or by one library, for the benefit of all those participating,”²⁹ with the Library of Congress (LC) as the natural place for this service to occur. The advantages and disadvantages of such an approach in general, and then as specifically applied to law libraries, were laid out. The latter were based in part on the results of a survey conducted to assess the usage and adequacy of the LC card distribution program among law libraries with collections exceeding 100,000 volumes. Ellinger concluded by recommending that “an advisory committee composed of members of the law library profession should be set up to consider these problems and try to meet them in cooperation with the Library of Congress,”³⁰ with special attention given to financing and policy concerns. He also debunked the fear that “centralized cataloging would spell the end of the cataloging profession.”³¹ The commentators and audience participants recognized the desirability of centralization, but expressed skepticism as to whether it could ever actually occur.

22. *Id.* at 303.

23. *Id.* at 304.

24. *Id.*

25. Elizabeth V. Benyon, *Simplified Cataloging*, 45 *LAW LIBR. J.* 316, 316 (1952).

26. *Id.* at 317.

27. *Id.* at 325.

28. *Id.* at 324.

29. Werner B. Ellinger, *Centralized Law Cataloging—Is a National Program Feasible?*, 45 *LAW LIBR. J.* 327, 327 (1952).

30. *Id.* at 334.

31. *Id.*

¶17 In a 1960 article, Helen Snook urged that “cooperative cataloging could provide a useful and practical service to many libraries both large and small.”³² Much of the material housed by law libraries was inaccessible. “The hidden treasure can elude both patron and librarian if the collection is not cataloged, or if cataloged, not analyzed.”³³ Cooperation would avoid the unnecessary and expensive duplication of effort while compensating for the scarcity of law catalogers. The AALL Committee on Cataloging and Classification had been charged in 1957 with exploring the costs and procedures involved in the cataloging of certain legal materials, followed by the production and distribution of catalog cards for them. Unfortunately no action was taken, even though interest “was revived at the Institute held at Grossinger’s in June 1959.”³⁴ Snook wanted to rectify this situation by gathering together some of the pros and cons on “the debates and suggestions to date”³⁵ so that the issue could be thoroughly discussed at the upcoming 1960 AALL annual meeting. One suggestion, acknowledging that time marches on, recommended not waiting for “the issue of any subject heading list or classification scheme”³⁶ in order to start a cooperative cataloging service.

¶18 The topic of cooperative cataloging was revisited by Joseph Vambery in 1967, another active year for articles on cataloging administration. He observed that “cataloging and the use of catalogs will be affected by automation to a great extent.”³⁷ Yet it was predicted that this effect would not be felt immediately. There was to be a transition period of approximately five years or so. During that time, law libraries could “prepare and assist a smooth transition to automation and to the complete use of shared cataloging”³⁸ in a number of ways. A call was made for “more intensive subject analysis,”³⁹ the transformation of catalogs into “dynamic files of records that assist in their own use,”⁴⁰ “uniform international description of each publication,”⁴¹ and increased cooperation between the Library of Congress and AALL. This projection into the future provided an aspect of optimism and renewed fervor based on the impending changes that automation was expected to bring about.

¶19 The panel on cataloging administration at the 1967 AALL annual meeting provided an excellent synopsis of the primary issues of concern at that time. The stated goal of the session was to “develop an overview of the organization of procedures and the deployment of staff, time and talent to achieve the objectives of bibliographic control in libraries.”⁴² Nancy E. Miller began by outlining the variety of aspects encompassed by the phrase *cataloging administration*: type of work,

32. Helen A. Snook, *Cooperative Effort in Cataloging*, 53 LAW LIBR. J. 115, 115 (1960).

33. *Id.*

34. *Id.* at 116.

35. *Id.*

36. *Id.*

37. Joseph T. Vambery, *The New Scope and Content of Cooperative Cataloging for Law Libraries*, 60 LAW LIBR. J. 244, 244 (1967).

38. *Id.* at 245

39. *Id.* at 244 (emphasis omitted).

40. *Id.* (emphasis omitted).

41. *Id.* at 245 (emphasis omitted).

42. *Cataloging Administration*, 60 LAW LIBR. J. 398, 398 (1967).

opportunity to combine some ordering and cataloging routines, reference to Project MARC (machine-readable cataloging) and data processing, availability of the KF classification schedule, shared cataloging, filing rules, and documentation.

¶20 Two speakers from the Library of Congress followed, with the first, Robert R. Holmes, describing the Library of Congress's "provision of a national cataloging service, the backbone of which is the distribution of printed cards"⁴³ and "its provision . . . of basic technical tools for cataloging and classification."⁴⁴ He then described the recently established National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging (NPAC) as "the Shared Cataloging Program."⁴⁵ He also discussed the details of the "assembly-line operation"⁴⁶ at the Library of Congress, including the Descriptive Cataloging Division, the Shared Cataloging Division, and the Subject Cataloging Division. He concluded by vowing to "continue present services on an enlarged scale,"⁴⁷ with the proviso: "Affecting our ability to provide more catalog copy and the technical tools will be adequate support—both financial support and intellectual support and guidance such as that given by professional associations,"⁴⁸ in this case, AALL.

¶21 The final paper from the Library of Congress was read by Lewis C. Coffin, but it was written by Paul Reimers about Project MARC. Background on the development of MARC was given, as were specifics on the activities of the pilot project, and "[t]he experiment [was] considered a success."⁴⁹ Given our comfortable familiarity with MARC, it is interesting to read early observations about it: "MARC may offer to law libraries a means of bibliographic control for the future. The new format has been designed to be as flexible as possible to serve as an effective vehicle for communicating bibliographic data."⁵⁰ Once again, careful planning was strongly advised to take full advantage of this tool for the benefit of law cataloging.

¶22 Despite the "eventual automation of the distribution process,"⁵¹ Elizabeth Neal's 1971 article compared five services that law libraries can consider in their purchase of catalog cards. Quality and cost factors were clearly outlined. All were based in some manner on the Library of Congress card service, which was the first to be evaluated in this article.

¶23 Patricia Piper and Cecilia Hing Ling Kwan presented the results of a cataloging survey they conducted in 1977, which showed "that law libraries are using Library of Congress subject headings and classification more than in the past and that law libraries which are accessing automated databases of bibliographic information are the most likely to be using these L.C. tools."⁵² This documented movement of law

43. *Id.* at 401.

44. *Id.*

45. *Id.* at 402.

46. *Id.* at 403.

47. *Id.* at 405.

48. *Id.*

49. *Id.* at 410.

50. *Id.* at 411.

51. Elizabeth A. Neal, *Commercial Cataloging*, 64 *LAW LIBR. J.* 23, 23 (1971).

52. Patricia L. Piper & Cecilia Hing Ling Kwan, *Cataloging and Classification Practices in Law Libraries: Results of a Questionnaire*, 71 *LAW LIBR. J.* 481, 481 (1978).

libraries away from “their individualistic approach”⁵³ and toward “conformity with national standards”⁵⁴ was projected to pick up as automation and the economic benefits of cooperation further streamlined the cataloging process. The authors confirmed their prediction with a similar survey just four years later in 1981:

A comparison of the results of this survey with one made in 1977 shows a marked increase in the use of standard library tools such as Library of Congress subject headings and classification schedules. Both surveys indicate a higher use of these tools by law libraries that are using automated cataloging systems.⁵⁵

¶24 In her 1983 article on the creation of a cataloging procedures manual at Southern Illinois University, Elizabeth Matthews noted that “Although the primary purpose for writing this manual was to aid internal management, the manual and the process of writing it have improved the Library’s service to users.”⁵⁶ She discussed the mission statements of her university’s law school and law library and then related both to the objectives of the library’s cataloging unit. Details were related about the content created for the manual, including an organizational chart, job descriptions, flow charts, and narrative descriptions of procedures. Acknowledging the reality that the manual “will never be complete,”⁵⁷ it was nonetheless credited with leading to greater staff independence.

¶25 Another ten years passed before Joseph Thomas tackled the topic of cataloging reform. In a revised version of a paper presented at the 1991 AALL annual meeting, he related conversations about cataloging reform that were occurring in the general library community:

Most of the arguments for change center on the need to get more information to patrons more quickly. That goal, whether stated explicitly or merely intimated, translates into policies that favor speed over the traditional attributes of good cataloging: accuracy, completeness, and adherence to national cataloging standards.⁵⁸

¶26 Thomas captured the tone of the current debates by noting that “the usefulness of the ‘main entry’ concept as a vital element in cataloging has come under increasing attack”⁵⁹ and that the “pressure to comply with the standards has increased in recent years.”⁶⁰ This pressure was more a result of the appearance of the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC), the first of the bibliographic utilities on the scene, rather than the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, Second Edition (AACR2) and, by extension, the Library of Congress Rule Interpretations. The dilemma arose when the Library of Congress was no longer the sole creator of bibliographic records to be used by other libraries. It was at that point that the issue

53. *Id.* at 483.

54. *Id.*

55. Patricia L. Piper & Cecilia Hing Ling Kwan, *Cataloging and Classification Practices in Law Libraries: Update*, 75 *LAW LIBR. J.* 375, 375 (1982).

56. Elizabeth W. Matthews, *The Making of a Cataloging Manual at Southern Illinois University*, 76 *LAW LIBR. J.* 123, 123 (1983).

57. *Id.* at 126.

58. Joseph W. Thomas, *Cataloging Reform: An Overview for Academic Law Librarians*, 85 *LAW LIBR. J.* 99, 99 (1993).

59. *Id.* at 100.

60. *Id.*

of quantity versus quality and associated economic concerns took on new importance. “The key distinction is between *accuracy* and *extent*,”⁶¹ wrote Thomas, who recommended that accuracy never be sacrificed. The extent of the catalog record should be minimized instead in order to save money. This emphasis on accuracy might be mitigated by a practical willingness to accept the cataloging of other libraries in the bibliographic utilities as they are, thus saving the expense of evaluating and revising them. Original cataloging presented a more difficult area for reform. “Lingering over rules, agonizing over arcane distinctions, and indecision exists here most of all.”⁶² Concern over unclear cataloging costs was coupled with the need to break from perfection as the goal of cataloging. Ultimately, “if we can streamline the cataloging process and keep the high-quality ideal in mind, perhaps a decent compromise can be hammered out.”⁶³

¶27 Outsourcing was the subject of a revised version of a presentation given by Janis Johnston at the 1995 AALL annual meeting. This session was planned in reaction to the recent outsourcing of the entire operation of some law libraries, though Johnston limited her observations to the outsourcing of cataloging functions. Libraries have been outsourcing portions of their work for a long time. It is just “a new name for an old practice.”⁶⁴ But there is now a “potentially much wider extent of application”⁶⁵ than in the past. Two successfully outsourced cataloging projects contracted for by the Kresge Library at Notre Dame Law School were described. A tradeoff was necessary in the quality of cataloging overall, but it was more than offset by the “affordable price”⁶⁶ and quick turnaround time in providing access. Johnston stated that “cataloging has become much more labor-intensive than it ought to be.”⁶⁷ This translated into being more expensive, since competition for law library dollars has increased significantly and shows no sign of abating. Johnston counseled catalogers to embrace outsourcing when it makes sense, thereby retaining control in “setting the level of acceptable quality.”⁶⁸ She concluded with this wise advice: “Don’t be intimidated by outsourcing; make it work for you.”⁶⁹

Subject Cataloging

¶28 The topic of subject cataloging first appeared in *LLJ* in 1915. J. Oscar Emrich lamented the lack of a catalogue when he “took charge of the Allegheny County Law Library” in 1907.⁷⁰ He began experimenting with ways to rearrange the text books on the shelves in such a manner that the patrons could find what they

61. *Id.* at 104.

62. *Id.* at 107.

63. *Id.* at 109.

64. Janis L. Johnston, *Outsourcing: New Name for an Old Practice*, 88 *LAW LIBR. J.* 128, 128 (1996).

65. *Id.*

66. *Id.* at 129.

67. *Id.* at 131.

68. *Id.* at 133.

69. *Id.* at 134.

70. J. Oscar Emrich, *Uniformity in Cataloguing*, 8 *LAW LIBR. J.* 31, 31 (1915).

needed without having to “first consult the librarian.”⁷¹ The criteria used for this project were listed in the form of questions: “First. How elastic is this system? Second. Has it any uniformity or basis? Third. Does this system contain all the necessary main titles?”⁷²

¶29 After a false start using “the text book titles or labels as they appeared on the back of the books,”⁷³ the American Digest Classification Scheme was created. This system was found to best meet the three criteria put forth as desirable: applicability to general reference works, to text books, and to legal magazine articles, supplemented by a system of cross-references. The inclusion of card examples and an illustration of the filing order, along with the actual list of the main and subtopics made this a very thorough article. Emrich concluded by noting the success of the catalog at increasing “the efficiency of the library by rendering it more easy [sic] to find the law.”⁷⁴

¶30 In 1931, William Randall contended that subject headings were “the most important single phase of cataloging”⁷⁵ yet “received the least attention.”⁷⁶ He advocated for the development of a list of subject headings for law and indicated that the University of Chicago graduate library school offered fellowships and scholarships to fund such work.

¶31 William B. Stern described the state of law subject headings in the proceedings of the 1952 AALL annual meeting recorded in *LLJ*. His article goes into great detail concerning the differences between subject and classed catalogs and between dictionary and divided catalogs, the issue of the appropriate number of subject headings assigned, the use of a library’s own local subject authority file versus use of the Library of Congress’s, modifications in the use of Library of Congress subject headings (LCSH) and the associated compilation of local lists of subject headings, and the necessity of keeping lists current. He characterized the process of subject cataloging as both complex and endless, but concluded with the recommendation that a special list of legal subject headings “could be compiled in a cooperative effort between the American Association of Law Libraries and the Library of Congress.”⁷⁷

¶32 In a 1964 article, Ellinger described how the “growing demand for a separate list of Library of Congress subject headings in their special field of interest”⁷⁸ led the AALL Committee on Cataloging and Classification to compile such a list.⁷⁹ All too quickly the challenge of keeping this list up-to-date arose. AALL proposed a maintenance project, which the Council on Library Resources accepted. The

71. *Id.*

72. *Id.* at 32.

73. *Id.*

74. *Id.* at 45.

75. William M. Randall, *The Cataloging of Legal Material for Non-legal Purposes*, 24 *LAW LIBR. J.* 55, 56 (1931).

76. *Id.*

77. William B. Stern, *Law Subject Headings*, 45 *LAW LIBR. J.* 305, 310 (1952).

78. Werner B. Ellinger, *Use of a Sequential Camera for Composition of a List of Subject Headings*, 57 *LAW LIBR. J.* 217, 217 (1964).

79. SUBJECT HEADINGS FOR THE LITERATURE OF LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW (AALL, Publications Ser. no. 6, 1963), cited in Ellinger, *supra* note 78.

Compos-O-Line camera was chosen as the appropriate tool to use in updating the list.

¶33 The year 1975 was a banner year for subject cataloging in *LLJ*, marked by three articles on the topic, all either authored or included comments by Peter Enyingi. The first described the Los Angeles County Law Library's local modifications to the use of LCSH and gave a detailed account of that library's project to reestablish its local subject authority file.⁸⁰ Modifications to the LCSH had been very common in law libraries, although it was acknowledged that this deviation was costly and difficult to document and maintain as headings were constantly being added and changed. As a result, all three articles mentioned the idea that law subject headings should be standardized and that law libraries should work with the Library of Congress to make the legal subject headings in LCSH most useful to them. The Subcommittee on Subject Cataloging was established in 1973 to further this goal. A survey was also undertaken that year to gauge the state of LCSH usage and modification among law libraries listed in the AALL directory.⁸¹

¶34 Then, at the 1975 AALL annual meeting in Los Angeles, Enyingi moderated a panel discussion entitled "What Lies Ahead for Legal Subject Headings," and its full content was captured as an article in *LLJ*.⁸² Panelist Edward J. Blume called for cooperation between law libraries and the Library of Congress in standardizing subject headings to ensure that law catalogers could utilize LCSH without any need for modification. Morris Cohen, another panelist, made a very strong case for cooperation and standardization on the grounds of economy and optimal service to academic law library users. Jack Ellenberger, representing the perspective of the private law firm library, recommended using new technology to make law library catalogs "more efficient, compact, and accessible."⁸³

¶35 Ellen Sandmeyer's 1977 article recapped some of the activities of 1975 and compared subject access provided through automation, with a focus on free text searching, Boolean logic, and relevance ranked searching. She demonstrated "that for maximum subject access, each bibliographic record should contain searchable title, index terms and abstract fields."⁸⁴ She recommended LCSH be used for subject terms since they are more detailed than the ones used in periodical literature indexing.

¶36 After this flurry of articles in the 1970s, there was a long gap in *LLJ*'s treatment of subject cataloging. It was not until 2006 that another article appeared, with Monica Martens describing the supplemental thesaurus to LCSH developed by the National Indian Law Library.⁸⁵ It is interesting to note that her approach is to use

80. Peter Enyingi, William T. Ford & Richard T. Iamele, *Library of Congress Subject Heading Modification and Development of the Subject Authority File at Los Angeles County Law Library*, 68 *LAW LIBR. J.* 1 (1975).

81. Peter Enyingi, *Subject Cataloging Practices in American Law Libraries: A Survey*, 68 *LAW LIBR. J.* 11 (1975).

82. *What Lies Ahead for Legal Subject Headings*, 68 *LAW LIBR. J.* 435 (1975).

83. *Id.* at 448.

84. Ellen C. Sandmeyer, *Subject Access to a Bibliographic Data Base for Law and Related Fields*, 70 *LAW LIBR. J.* 349, 357 (1977).

85. Monica Martens, *Creating a Supplemental Thesaurus to LCSH for a Specialized Collection: The Experience of the National Indian Law Library*, 98 *LAW LIBR. J.* 287, 2006 *LAW LIBR. J.* 16.

LCSH as is and then supplement it as necessary rather than to modify LCSH, as was the method described so frequently in the early *LLJ* articles on subject cataloging. Standardization and sharing were emphasized by Martens.

Rules

¶37 This handful of articles reflects only those published in *LLJ* on the topic of cataloging rules. Numerous conversations on these important subjects were conducted among law catalogers in many other venues over the years. In 1942, Lena Keller, chairman of the AALL's new Committee on Cataloging, presented the Committee's preliminary report in response to the preliminary American second edition of the ALA Catalog Rules.⁸⁶ Feedback on the recommendations in the report was requested from every law library in AALL. The Committee focused on the issues of main entry and uniform titles, but asked especially for input on two items: "Should administrative tribunals be included under form heading Reports? Should Court rules, etc. be made a form heading under jurisdiction?"⁸⁷

¶38 In a lengthy 1955 article, the AALL Committee on Cataloging submitted "a comprehensive proposal for the revision of the A.L.A. rules of entry for materials of primary importance to law libraries and of related rules that affect the usefulness of the cataloging code for law libraries in general."⁸⁸ The specific recommendations, examples, and comments revealed a detailed picture of the cataloging rules at that time, along with a suggested blueprint for their future revision. Many of the recommendations regarding entry and uniform title persist to this day in the current cataloging rules as listed in both AACR2 and Resource Description and Access (RDA).

¶39 The impending implementation of AACR2 provided ample fodder for discussion at sessions during the 1978 and 1979 AALL annual meetings, three of which were captured in *LLJ*. The first was a panel that focused on "the rules based on an examination of the unpublished draft"⁸⁹ by the co-moderators, Phyllis Marion and Cecilia Kwan. The program covered "a brief history of the development of AACR 2[,] . . . the general format of the rules and . . . some details about the rules themselves[,] . . . the rules for handling law materials[,] . . . [and] the administrative repercussions of the changes."⁹⁰

¶40 Marion repeated some of the same information in her contribution to another 1978 program, entitled "Planning for a Change." She also added to her extensive remarks on AACR2 the news that the Library of Congress would be making substantial changes in its subject heading practice and that it is conducting a "study of machine shelving."⁹¹ All of these major changes were projected to

86. Lena Keller, *What Changes Shall Be Proposed to the ALA Committee Pending Publication of the Catalog Rules in Final Form?*, 35 *LAW LIBR. J.* 165, 165 (1942).

87. *Id.* at 166.

88. *Revision of the A.L.A. Cataloging Rules of Entry for Legal Materials and Related Rules*, 48 *LAW LIBR. J.* 3, 3 (1955).

89. *The Anglo-American Cataloging Rules 2d Edition*, 71 *LAW LIBR. J.* 598, 598 (1978).

90. *Id.*

91. Phyllis C. Marion, *AACR 2*, 71 *LAW LIBR. J.* 673, 675 (1978).

converge on January 2, 1980, also known as “Day 1.” On that day, the Library of Congress would “start to build a new catalog, using AACR2, the revised subject headings, the 19th edition of Dewey, and perhaps, a new shelflisting device. The new online catalog would be independent of the existing catalog.”⁹² Marion then outlined the variety of possible approaches available to law libraries faced with the incompatibility issues they would need to address in their catalogs because of this veritable avalanche of change. She concluded with a plug for adherence to standards (within reason) and accountability (both fiscal and productivity).

¶41 During the final panel, “Implications of the AACR2 for Law Libraries,” held during the 1979 AALL annual meeting, it became evident that “Day 1” had been pushed back one year to 1981. The first speaker, Al Lewis, gave his take on the effect of AACR2 on public service law librarians. Although he characterized the new code in general as “an improvement,”⁹³ he warned that certain changes would cause public service law librarians “to have as much trouble guessing at [the] main entry under the new rules as they did under the old.”⁹⁴ Colleen Raker focused her attention on “the alternative of continuing the card catalog after 1981, the techniques for integrating AACR2 entries and the new subject headings into existing catalogs and the effect this approach [would] have on technical services.”⁹⁵ Catalog card examples served to illustrate the former, followed by a list of other issues to “be aware of”: serial entry changes, acquisition orders, shelflisting problems, filing problems, work-flow problems, and additional costs involved. Looking ahead to the implementation of AACR2, Joe Rosenthal identified several factors:

1. Relationship of the law library to other libraries, either, for example, to the general library system of a college or university or to other law libraries participating in a law library network.
2. The dependence or independence of the law library on receipt and utilization of catalog data from the Library of Congress, and
3. Utilization of services provided by technical processing data utilities and which particular data utility is providing or will provide those services.⁹⁶

Rosenthal closed with some interesting speculation about how a library might obtain “an online access system of its own,”⁹⁷ suggestions which have come to fruition since then.

¶42 It has been thirty-four years since *LLJ* has published an article focusing on the cataloging rules. Perhaps it is time to remedy that. A new code, RDA, was implemented in 2013, and it represents a significant departure from AACR2. While RDA has been a popular topic among all catalogers, including law catalogers, for a number of years now, bringing that conversation to *LLJ* might better engage the attention of non-technical services law librarians.

92. *Id.* at 676.

93. *Implications of the AACR2 for Law Libraries*, 72 *LAW LIBR. J.* 690, 694 (1979).

94. *Id.* at 690.

95. *Id.* at 695.

96. *Id.* at 701.

97. *Id.* at 704.

Automation

¶43 The 1970 AALL annual meeting provided a panel on MARC's value to law libraries. Riemers began by describing MARC's development from a pilot project to the revision of the format into what became known as MARC II. The subscription service provided "records on tape [that] are being used to support projects in acquisitions, in catalog maintenance, and in current awareness. Catalogs are being produced from the tape, both in card and in book form."⁹⁸ The next speaker, Robert C. Miller, outlined the use of the MARC tapes in conjunction with the integrated system created locally and in use at the University of Chicago. He closed with a plea for standardization and recognition of the fact that commercial services are "probably going to be the answer to how MARC can best be used for law libraries."⁹⁹ Frederick E. Smith took the cue and focused on "commercial exploitation of MARC," which he defined as "exploitation of MARC through an intermediary, outside the utilizing library, and to which the utilizing library *usually* pays a fee."¹⁰⁰ He then described the various commercial services in existence, including two that are nonprofit: NELINET (New England Library Information Network) and OCLC, which "had 54 members in February 1970, all academic libraries."¹⁰¹ He noted that among these entities, along with a number of for-profit companies, "the greatest emphasis seem[ed] to be on producing hard copy of what is on the MARC tapes."¹⁰² Smith indicated that this could be accomplished in a variety of other ways to meet the needs as first mentioned by Riemers. The importance of retrospective conversion of existing bibliographic data into the MARC format was mentioned only fleetingly. The prediction that automation would be increasingly economical for all libraries closed this article on an optimistic note.

¶44 Elizabeth Matthews's paper on the relatively new process of cataloging on OCLC was based on a presentation she made at the 1976 AALL annual meeting. She provided specific information on costs and on the actual mechanics of working at "the cathode ray tube-video-type screen and typewriter-like keyboard,"¹⁰³ and reported on the work flow and resultant receipt of catalog cards at the Southern Illinois University School of Law, which had been established in 1972. She spoke highly of the ability of OCLC cataloging to minimize "the rate of rise of cataloging cost"¹⁰⁴ and cited other advantages the system offered, including "conversion of current cataloging data to machine readable form, access to local information of over 600 libraries constantly updated, transfer of catalog records to a national standard format, more efficient utilization of staff time, and the potential for collection building for maximum effectiveness by access to information on other library holdings."¹⁰⁵

98. *MARC II and Its Importance for Law Libraries*, 63 LAW LIBR. J. 505, 510 (1970).

99. *Id.* at 514.

100. *Id.* at 515.

101. *Id.* at 516.

102. *Id.* at 518.

103. Elizabeth W. Matthews, *Cataloging Legal Materials On-Line*, 70 LAW LIBR. J. 36, 37 (1977).

104. *Id.* at 36.

105. *Id.* at 38.

¶45 The next article in this category, also by Matthews, reported the results of a survey she conducted concerning the use of “computerized cataloging” in academic law libraries. Her results, which she presented to the OCLC Special Interest Section during the 1978 AALL annual meeting, included the following findings:

- 65% of respondents either used or planned to use computers for processing
- 97% indicated “a preference for computerized cataloging”
- 75% “agreed with the quality” of the bibliographic records
- 80% showed “the average number of books processed had increased”
- 72% reported classification as the area requiring the most frequent changes in records (according to Matthews, “the overwhelming majority are classifying by the Library of Congress system”)¹⁰⁶
- 65% were engaged in reclassification projects
- 67% used on-the-job training for staff members

Matthews’s closing observation has certainly been proven true of the bibliographic utilities over time: “Contributions to the database by law librarians will increase the total of legal items described, thereby making the network a tool of greater value than previously to the law community.”¹⁰⁷

¶46 Christian Boissonnas reported the results of a 1977 study “to determine the costs of cataloging and editing OCLC records at the Cornell Law Library.”¹⁰⁸ He acknowledged up front that “[q]uality is a concept that means different things to different institutions.”¹⁰⁹ He demonstrated through the study that Cornell Law Library encountered the need for record modification most often in terms of missing classification numbers, “the format of cataloging, or tagging problems.”¹¹⁰ As could be expected, “a lot more work [was] necessary with OCLC member records than with [Library of Congress] records.”¹¹¹ He concluded with a caution to OCLC that low-quality records may generate more of the same, thereby leaving “the ultimate usefulness of the database . . . open to question.”¹¹² It is interesting to note that the same concern is often expressed about OCLC member records today.

¶47 At about the same time, Kent Schriefer and Linnea Christiani conducted a similar study of the Research Libraries’ Information Network (RLIN) record use and quality at the law school library at the University of California, Berkeley. This article provided considerable detail about the flow of materials in terms of searching and cataloging on RLIN. It also included illustrations of worksheets for both copy and original cataloging. Emphasis was placed on the fact that “the Law Library has minimized the time between searches and created input priorities by imprint

106. Elizabeth W. Matthews, *Effect of OCLC on Workflow in Law Libraries*, 71 *LAW LIBR. J.* 660, 664 (1978).

107. *Id.* at 667.

108. Christian M. Boissonnas, *The Quality of OCLC Bibliographic Records: The Cornell Law Library Experience*, 72 *LAW LIBR. J.* 80, 81 (1979).

109. *Id.* at 80.

110. *Id.* at 82.

111. *Id.* at 83.

112. *Id.* at 85.

date,¹¹³ in order to avoid costly duplication of effort with other RLIN member law libraries. This article also reported types of errors or standard deviations that required revision or upgrading in RLIN records. It ended on an upbeat note, observing that “the goal of high quality shared cataloging among law libraries seems realizable.”¹¹⁴

¶48 Melanie Niermann Norten and Donna Hirst looked at law library cataloging as provided by OCLC and RLIN in a 1980 article: “[i]n 1978 the law library at the University of Iowa began a year long study ... A comparison of manual and automated cataloging was made and two major automated cataloging systems, OCLC . . . and RLIN . . . , were investigated.”¹¹⁵ Staffing shortages and increasing backlogs were given as justification for a reexamination of the manual cataloging process. These problems, along with the impending implementation of AACR2, “a new [Library of Congress] subject headings list and revised American Library Association filing rules,”¹¹⁶ added to the need for a more efficient method of cataloging. Norten and Hirst carefully evaluated the functions of searching, cataloging and classification, and card production in manual versus automated approaches. They then focused on the vital statistics (size, content, growth rate, quality control, hit rate, and cost) of OCLC versus RLIN. Not surprisingly, they concluded that their library “should automate its cataloging processes.”¹¹⁷ They further recommended that RLIN “would best serve the present and future needs of the library.”¹¹⁸

¶49 An article about a 1980 AALL annual meeting panel entitled “Cost-Effective Participation in a Bibliographic Utility by a Small Library” was published by *LLJ* in 1980.¹¹⁹ It contrasts with the two preceding articles, which focused on the use of a bibliographic utility in large academic law libraries. In the overview segment, Margaret Maes Axtmann defined basic terminology, described three utilities (Western Library Network, RLIN, and OCLC), and provided a selected bibliography. Jacqueline Paul presented the consortium method of participating in OCLC as “a cost efficient arrangement”¹²⁰ that resulted in the quick elimination of cataloging backlogs for the member libraries in the group. Roberta Walters reported on the Alameda County Law Library’s membership in RLIN and its efforts to minimize the cost of that participation as much as possible.

¶50 In a 1986 article, Matthews described a project undertaken at the Southern Illinois University School of Law Library, where the “goal was to have a consolidated OCLC archival magnetic tape that included the entire bibliographic record of our collection.”¹²¹ This “de-duped” tape allowed for the creation of a computer

113. Kent Schriefer & Linnea Christiani, *Ballots at Boalt*, 72 *LAW LIBR. J.* 497, 504 (1979).

114. *Id.* at 512.

115. Melanie Nietmann Norten & Donna Hirst, *Computerized Cataloging in Law Libraries: OCLC and RLIN Compared*, 73 *LAW LIBR. J.* 107, 107 (1980).

116. *Id.*

117. *Id.* at 120.

118. *Id.*

119. *Cost-Effective Participation in a Bibliographic Utility by a Small Library*, 73 *LAW LIBR. J.* 908, 908 (1980).

120. *Id.* at 912.

121. Elizabeth W. Matthews, *Quality Control for Archival Tapes*, 78 *LAW LIBR. J.* 711, 711 (1986).

output microform catalog “to view in printed form what was on the tape.”¹²² This access made cleanup of the records possible, thus setting the stage “in the future for a quality on-line catalog.”¹²³

¶51 In a related 1987 article, Chizuko Kawamoto detailed the method of file analysis conducted at the law library of the California State Library in preparation for retrospective conversion, with the ultimate objective of creating an online catalog. The lengthy list of manual files Kawamoto identified for analysis served as enough justification for automation: “five public catalogs, eight shelflists, a serials/continuations check-in file, an order file, three authority files, a circulation file, a missing titles file, and a withdrawn titles file.”¹²⁴ The attempt to categorize the titles ran up against the usual challenge in which legal materials encompass hybrid types more numerous than those represented by the MARC file formats. Librarians involved in such conversions should “first spend some time, during the planning stage, discovering those odd practices of the past and devising solutions to the problems,” Kawamoto suggested.¹²⁵ Following her own advice, she listed eleven problems to be addressed during the conversion of data in her library.

¶52 Matthews revisited the topic of archival tapes in 1988, this time in the form of “a survey of academic law library OCLC users regarding institutional uses of OCLC archival tapes, physical maintenance of the tapes, uses of the tapes in projects, and maintenance of data bases.”¹²⁶ The survey also sought to determine the prevalence of online catalogs, and while only 18% of respondents had such a catalog, most of the rest were planning for one in the not too distant future. The closing sentence summarized it well: “The on-line catalog is only as good as the bibliographic data furnished, and it depends on the archival MARC records for a vital data base.”

¶53 Johnston also conducted a survey in 1988, focusing on automation via a local system instead of a bibliographic utility.

[T]wenty-four academic law libraries using the NOTIS [Northwestern Online Total Integrated System] system . . . were asked to comment on their relationship with the main library in using NOTIS, their relationship with NOTIS, Inc., their reactions to the implementation of various NOTIS modules, their overall assessment of the system, and concerns for the future development of the NOTIS system.¹²⁷

The results of the survey were mixed and left the impression that installation of NOTIS in conjunction with the main library was simply a means for these law libraries to obtain any local integrated system, rather than a vote of confidence in

122. *Id.* at 716.

123. *Id.* at 718.

124. Chizuko Kawamoto, *File Analysis for Retrospective Conversion: The Case of the California State Library*, *Law Library*, 79 *LAW LIBR. J.* 455, 456–57 (1987).

125. *Id.* at 462.

126. Elizabeth W. Matthews, *Uses of OCLC Archival Tapes and Planning for On-Line Catalogs: A Descriptive Survey*, 80 *LAW LIBR. J.* 651, 651 (1988).

127. Janis L. Johnston, *NOTIS Users' Survey: An Initial Reaction*, 82 *LAW LIBR. J.* 531, 531 (1990).

the specific system of NOTIS. The author did note, however, that “law libraries’ use of NOTIS is in its early stages.”¹²⁸

¶54 With local automated system implementations on the rise, Jo Calk “provide[d] a brief description of the elements of the USMARC format and examples of vendor specifications employing USMARC format”¹²⁹ in a paper based on a presentation at the 1989 AALL annual meeting. “The MARC II format, as implemented by the Library of Congress, is called the USMARC format,” Calk explained.¹³⁰ The author provided a basic introduction to the USMARC formats for bibliographic and authority data, accompanied by helpful charts, a glossary, and a bibliography.

¶55 Leonette Williams’s 1994 article presented a creative solution to the University of Southern California Law Library’s (USC) implementation of an Innovative Interfaces’ Innovacq local system. Concerns included “staffing, completion of the conversion before the law school began a large remodeling and building project, and our lack of essential bibliographic records in machine-readable format for our continuations.”¹³¹ With the cooperation of the University of California at Davis Law Library, USC created specifications for Innovative Interfaces’ staff to apply to the Davis Innovacq records. Those records then served as the basis for the Innovacq system installed at USC. This approach was successful since it allowed USC to automate its acquisitions and serials check-in operations relatively rapidly and within its prescribed timeframe. Nonetheless, the author closed on an appropriately cautionary note: “Each library must consider its own expectations for automation in terms of available time, resources, personnel, and bibliographic records.”¹³²

¶56 Julie Thomas began her 1997 article with a provocative and persistent question: “Is the cataloger going the way of the dinosaur?”¹³³ She then described a study “undertaken to measure the extent to which the original cataloging created by the Drake University Law Library was subsequently used in OCLC and to identify the types of libraries most likely to use these records.”¹³⁴ The results revealed that “[t]otal usage for Drake-input original cataloging . . . was sixty-three percent,”¹³⁵ thus justifying the “expensive, time-consuming activity”¹³⁶ of original cataloging, and presumably by extension, the value of the cataloger as well.

¶57 In her 2006 article, Nancy Babb compared “the intra-catalog resource of subject headings to the extra-catalog resources of bibliography, and [highlighted] the difference between these two seemingly intimately related resources.”¹³⁷ The

128. *Id.* at 535.

129. Jo Calk, *USMARC Self-Defense*, 82 *LAW LIBR. J.* 683, 683 (1990).

130. *Id.* at 684.

131. Leonette M. Williams, *Automating with Another Library’s Bibliographic Records*, 86 *LAW LIBR. J.* 169, 169–70 (1994).

132. *Id.* at 174.

133. Julie A. Thomas, *Use Study of OCLC Cataloging in an Academic Law Library*, 89 *LAW LIBR. J.* 31, 31 (1997).

134. *Id.* at 33.

135. *Id.* at 36.

136. *Id.* at 32.

137. Nancy Babb, *Bibliography versus Auto-bibliography: Tackling the Transformation of Traditions in the Research Project*, 98 *LAW LIBR. J.* 451, 451, 2006 *LAW LIBR. J.* 26, ¶ 2.

study was framed within the context of online access, since “more and more research now begins on the World Wide Web.” The conclusion stated that subject headings or “[a]uto-bibliography [was] not bibliography, but it can be an effective tool in support of the research process and, not insignificantly, the continued advancement of scholarship, including the production of scholarly bibliography.”¹³⁸ This validated the interconnected nature of the technical and public services sides of librarianship, despite the numerous changes in use of the vast variety of research resources available today.

¶58 In her 2010 article, Georgia Briscoe delivered some bad news about online catalogs: “quality control of the metadata in online law library catalogs was shown to be lacking . . . academic law reference librarians determined that the errors would affect their ability to answer reference questions accurately and efficiently.”¹³⁹ She described a number of reasons for this situation and expressed the hope “that the research reported here [would] spur libraries to make the best decisions in the continual cost-benefit analysis for keeping the library online catalog as accurate as possible.”¹⁴⁰ In his 2011 article, Robert Richards reported the results of a survey on the use of non-MARC metadata in AALL libraries. He identified “a possible need within the law library community for more education on how to foster metadata interoperability in the emerging digital environment.”¹⁴¹ These relatively recent articles provided important advice as law libraries look ahead to their next-generation, web-scale management systems.

Authority Control

¶59 Authority control was discussed mostly in the context of automation. The topic was first addressed in the report of a panel held during the 1980 AALL annual meeting in St. Louis. Diane Hillmann referred to AACR2 as “the great leveler” and added this cautionary note: “[W]e must have some way to make sure that we are not creating split files, or if we have decided to live with split files, of maintaining links between those files.”¹⁴² The presentations provided detailed views of the authority control subsystems of the RLIN, WLN, and University of Toronto Library Automated Systems bibliographic utilities as they existed then. Later, in 1989, two articles also based on AALL conference papers appeared. Michele Dalehite explained that “vendor-supplied authority control serves as a tool to aid the catalogers in maintaining authority data. It does not eliminate authority work.”¹⁴³ In her article, Alva Stone relayed the Florida State University experience with its online authority file. She described the savings in staff time and effort associated with

138. *Id.* at 479.

139. Georgia Briscoe, *The Quality of Academic Law Library Online Catalogs and Its Effect on Information Retrieval*, 102 *LAW LIBR. J.* 599, 609, 2010 *LAW LIBR. J.* 34, ¶ 44.

140. *Id.*

141. Robert Richards, *The Use of Non-MARC Metadata in AALL Libraries: A Baseline Study*, 103 *LAW LIBR. J.* 631, 657, 2011 *LAW LIBR. J.* ¶52.

142. *Authority Control or the Key to Survival in the Eighties*, 73 *LAW LIBR. J.* 929, 929 (1980).

143. Michele I. Dalehite, *Vendor-Supplied Authority Control: What It Is and How to Get It*, 81 *LAW LIBR. J.* 117, 127 (1989).

contracting “with a commercial vendor to execute automated authority processing on the library’s machine-readable bibliographic records.”¹⁴⁴ In addition, she observed that “[l]ibrary patrons benefit from the catalog cross-references that are generated from the machine-readable authority records, and the vendor’s corrections of most of the inaccuracies or inconsistencies on bibliographic headings also help to achieve a more ‘user friendly’ catalog.”¹⁴⁵

Microforms

¶60 A microform symposium issue of *LLJ* published in 1983 included the topic of cataloging microforms. Hillmann covered this process using RLIN as the bibliographic utility, while Adrienne deVergie focused on OCLC usage for this format. “RLIN has developed some useful solutions to the problem of cataloging microforms,”¹⁴⁶ Hillmann reported. The RLIN enhancements made it easier for catalogers to identify microform records during the search process. And if no microform record existed, it was “relatively simple” to create one from an existing RLIN hardcopy record.¹⁴⁷ In addition, the “flexibility of the RLIN system allow[ed] considerable local variation in the handling of microforms.”¹⁴⁸

¶61 In her OCLC article, deVergie stated:

The implementation of AACR2 in January 1981 caused considerable controversy regarding the treatment of microreproductions. . . . OCLC encourages member libraries to input microreproductions according to the official policy on microform cataloging of the Library of Congress (LC). . . . [T]he policy applies AACR2 in determining the choice and form of access points but emphasizes data relating to the original item in the descriptive cataloging and gives data relating to the reproduction in a secondary position (that is, in a note). . . . Because of the contradictions between AACR2’s Chapter 11 and LC’s policy and the resulting database inconsistencies, the burden is upon catalogers to set up strict standards for the original cataloging of microforms and, time and staff permitting, to edit the inconsistent member records to conform to these standards.¹⁴⁹

OCLC does not provide a method to home in quickly on microform records while searching, but it does facilitate rapid cataloging of microform by deriving from print records, as RLIN does. Linda Cross’s article in 1985 showed that not much had changed regarding searches of microform records on OCLC. In order to mitigate the problem of duplication, Cross said that she “kept an account in table form of the microfiche serial records located for the session laws” in the hope that “this listing could be valuable to other law libraries.”¹⁵⁰

144. Alva Theresa Stone, *Vendor Processing and Local Authority File Development*, 81 *LAW LIBR. J.* 131, 132 (1989).

145. *Id.* at 141.

146. Diane I. Hillmann, *Cataloging Microforms Using RLIN*, 96 *LAW LIBR. J.* 378, 378 (1983).

147. *Id.* at 379.

148. *Id.*

149. Adrienne deVergie, *Cataloging Microreproductions on OCLC: One Cataloger’s Experience*, 76 *LAW LIBR. J.* 380, 380 (1983).

150. Linda Cross, *Cataloging State Session Laws in Microfiche*, 77 *LAW LIBR. J.* 719, 719 (1985).

Electronic Resources

¶62 Given the integral role of Lexis and Westlaw in legal research, it comes as no surprise that law librarians were the first to consider and then experiment with putting bibliographic records in their catalogs to represent remote, full-text legal databases. The cataloging of these full-text legal databases inspired six articles in the pages of *LLJ* from 1984 to 2000. Marion introduced the concept in 1984 with the question: “if your library has prided itself on the library catalog being an almost complete finding tool to your collection, shouldn’t you add your on-line data base titles to that tool?”¹⁵¹ While she answered her question with a resounding yes, she also discussed the challenges associated with the endeavor. “On-line texts, in effect, have the characteristics of super looseleaf services; that is, they have an infinite capacity for change.”¹⁵² Fortunately, law librarians have “more experience dealing with this kind of change than most of our colleagues because of our long acquaintance with looseleaf publications.”¹⁵³

¶63 William Benemann’s 1987 article turned Marion’s concept into reality: The “Golden Gate University Law Library has adopted a policy of including in its public card catalog full cataloging for items found on WESTLAW and/or LEXIS.”¹⁵⁴ Unfortunately there was a void when it came to standards for cataloging such titles. While guidelines for the cataloging of machine-readable data files (MRDFs) were under development, it was a slow process that “concentrate[d] solely on data files such as stacks of punched cards, computer tapes, and discs,”¹⁵⁵ and not on remote-access, full-text databases that had no physicality. So Golden Gate decided to model its approach after the Library of Congress’s guidelines in use for the cataloging of microforms. Specifics concerning the local handling of five different permutations of online and other formats of the same content were detailed, accompanied by examples of catalog cards for each. The problem of catalog maintenance on these rapidly changing files was addressed, as was the issue of referring all users to these legal databases, access to which was limited to those covered under the law library’s contract. This latter was justified by “the need to inform our primary patrons of the existence of this material.”¹⁵⁶ With a touch of foreshadowing, Benemann concluded with a recommendation: “Impetus toward a national standard could be provided by the data base producers themselves.”¹⁵⁷

¶64 Also in 1987, the Law Program Committee (LPC) of the Research Libraries Group (RLG) explored the possibility of a cooperative project involving two law libraries and two database vendors.¹⁵⁸ The University at Buffalo Law Library

151. Phyllis C. Marion, *Technical Services Aspects of Data Base Integration into the Law Library*, 77 *LAW LIBR. J.* 146, 147 (1984).

152. *Id.* at 150.

153. *Id.*

154. William E. Benemann, *Cataloging of Legal Research Data Bases Using RLIN: A Practicum*, 79 *LAW LIBR. J.* 53, 54 (1987).

155. *Id.* at 55.

156. *Id.* at 64.

157. *Id.* at 65.

158. Gail M. Daly, *Library–Vendor Cooperation in Cataloging Legal Research Databases: The Minnesota/WESTLAW Experience*, 82 *LAW LIBR. J.* 331, 333 (1990).

volunteered to catalog the Lexis files¹⁵⁹ and the University of Minnesota Law Library would catalog the Westlaw files. In a 1990 article, Gail Daly described the project and focused on the Westlaw effort at Minnesota. The proposal of national standards for cataloging computer files, along with RLG's commitment to the development of "set processing"¹⁶⁰ (or batch load capability), laid the groundwork for the Buffalo–Minnesota initiative. A subcommittee of the LPC was formed and "charged with establishing communication with appropriate RLG committees, preparing and recommending standards for cataloging the databases, identifying the nature and scope of the project, and addressing the issue of maintaining the active databases once the initial project was completed."¹⁶¹ Staff at Minnesota and Buffalo and the members of the LPC subcommittee collaborated to achieve consistency in certain areas, agreeing (1) to use the monographic MARC format rather than the serial format (despite the dynamic nature of the files), (2) to catalog the files independently of their "hard-copy equivalents," (3) to provide "specific phrasing of various cataloging notes,"¹⁶² and (4) to use the LCSH subdivision "Data bases." The active participation of Mead Data Central (Lexis) and West Publishing Company (Westlaw) was emphasized as critical in making the project a reality.

¶65 Stating that "[l]ibrarians can no longer treat these full-text computer files differently from any other research material,"¹⁶³ Matthews undertook a parallel, independent effort to catalog the Lexis files, which she described in her 1990 article. She began by using catalog cards until the draft revision of the cataloging rules for computer files¹⁶⁴ was released in 1987; at that point she began to input the records into OCLC. Matthews ended up establishing many of the same cataloging decisions for this project as those followed in the RLG project described by Daly.

¶66 Daly wrote her first article while the work was still in its initial phase, but she revisited it in 1995, explaining that the "passage of time" as well as the RLIN Law Program Committee (LPC) project's failure led her "to reconsider the wisdom of this approach for providing access to database files."¹⁶⁵ Daly presented a long list of factors that accounted for the project's demise, including changing and expanding databases, which had "become so large that it [was] virtually impossible . . . to remain current with system changes and database contents."¹⁶⁶ At the same time, she declared her belief that "[t]he failure of law library projects to provide such

159. For details about this part of the project, see Ellen McGrath, *Cataloging Legal Databases Available Through LEXIS*, CATALOGING & CLASSIFICATION Q., 1992 no. 1, at 3; ELLEN MCGRATH, GUIDELINES FOR CATALOGING THE FILES AVAILABLE THROUGH LEXIS (Am. Ass'n of L. Libr., Occasional Papers Ser. no. 11, 1992).

160. Daly, *supra* note 158, at 333.

161. *Id.* at 334.

162. *Id.* at 337.

163. Elizabeth W. Matthews, *Integrating Remote Computer File Databases into the Collection with Bibliographic Description*, 82 LAW LIBR. J. 341, 349 (1990).

164. CHAPTER 9 COMPUTER FILES: DRAFT REVISION (1987).

165. Gail M. Daly, *Bibliographic Access to Legal Research Databases Reconsidered*, 87 LAW LIBR. J. 192, 192 (1995).

166. *Id.* at 193.

information through traditional bibliographic means” should not stop librarians “from exploring other methods.”¹⁶⁷

¶67 Despite the fact that “[o]rganizing access to remote electronic resources could be the greatest challenge faced by modern cataloging,”¹⁶⁸ Hope Breeze returned to the topic five years later and encouraged catalogers to once again tackle it, though now her focus was on all types of such remote resources, not only the Lexis and Westlaw databases. She also referred to the LPC project’s failure and acknowledged that

The answer is clearly to compromise between providing catalog access to all resources and providing none, and striking this balance by careful planning. This planning should include clear reasons for cataloging these materials, a policy for what categories are to be included, guidelines for record content, and strategies for maintaining accurate data. Above all, it should be predicated on providing access to resources that meet the collection mission of the library.¹⁶⁹

¶68 Karen Selden also addressed the topic in 2000 in an article “light on theory and heavy on practical ideas and examples for librarians to use as they approach the prospect of cataloging Internet resources.”¹⁷⁰ She related the University of Colorado Law Library’s activities, which included “forming policies, providing access to Internet resources, choosing which bibliographic record to use, enhancing catalog access, selecting Internet resources for inclusion in the catalog, considering OPAC display parameters, and verifying links to cataloged Internet resources.”¹⁷¹

¶69 Selden listed “three options for providing access to Internet resources”¹⁷²: (1) “through subject-oriented Web pages,”¹⁷³ (2) “directly from the bibliographic record retrieved during an OPAC search,”¹⁷⁴ and (3) “a combination of these two methods, using the first option for some resources, and the second for others.”¹⁷⁵ These options, along with their many pros and cons, were further described by Georgia Briscoe, Karen Selden, and Cheryl Rae Nyberg in an article based on a presentation they gave at the 2002 AALL annual meeting.¹⁷⁶ They advocated a combined approach for providing access to internet resources. “Patrons need access to electronic resources, and librarians will provide that access as well as they can—and when in doubt, librarians will probably provide as many access points as possible,” they wrote.¹⁷⁷

167. *Id.* at 201.

168. Hope Breeze, *Cataloging Remote Electronic Resources*, 92 *LAW LIBR. J.* 91, 91, 2000 *LAW LIBR. J.* 7, ¶1.

169. *Id.* at 97, ¶ 20.

170. Karen Selden, *Linking Globally, Coping Locally: Cataloging Internet Resources at the University of Colorado Law Library*, 92 *LAW LIBR. J.* 439, 439–40, 2000 *LAW LIBR. J.* 37, ¶ 2.

171. *Id.* at 440, ¶ 3.

172. *Id.* at 443, ¶ 12.

173. *Id.*

174. *Id.* at 443, ¶ 13.

175. *Id.* at 444, ¶ 14.

176. Georgia Briscoe, Karen Selden & Cheryl Rae Nyberg, *The Catalog vs. the Home Page? Best Practices in Connecting to Online Resources*, 95 *LAW LIBR. J.* 151, 151, 2003 *LAW LIBR. J.* 10, n.*.

177. *Id.* at 173, ¶ 80.

Conclusion

¶70 Although the number of *LLJ* articles about cataloging is relatively small over the past 105 years, there are some valuable cataloging bibliographies published in 1968, 1975, and 1991.¹⁷⁸ In addition, the “Centennial Feature” in the fall 2008 issue of *LLJ* provided recommended reading lists from the various AALL special interest sections, including ones from the Online Bibliographic Services (OBS) and Technical Services (TS), the two most likely to deal with cataloging issues.¹⁷⁹

¶71 These articles represent small snapshots of the status of these cataloging issues and their effect on the law library community. Unfortunately they exist in relative isolation, with little or no follow-up within *LLJ* as to the further development or resolution of these issues. While it is likely that in some cases, the conversation continued in venues other than *LLJ* (such as general cataloging journals, newsletters, and later on through e-mail and blogs), it is regrettable that it was not captured in these pages for the convenience of having it all recorded in the same place. The pages of *Technical Services Law Librarian (TSLL)*, the official publication of the Technical Services and Online Bibliographic Services Special Interest Sections of the AALL, present another venue in which law catalogers can pose questions about their cataloging conundrums and receive expert advice from colleagues. Since its first issue in 1975, *TSLL* has been an outlet for briefer topical pieces. It publishes two regular columns that deal with cataloging, “Description and Entry” and “Subject Headings,” as well as various other special columns and conference reports. A law cataloger cannot function properly without keeping up with each quarterly issue of *TSLL*, but it is unlikely that other types of law librarians read it on a regular basis.

¶72 I am as guilty as the next law cataloger in my failure to publish on cataloging topics within the pages of *LLJ*. But as the pace of change has accelerated over the years, law catalogers find themselves with less and less time to reflect upon the nature of their work, let alone to research and publish in a peer-reviewed journal such as *LLJ*. Sadly it is our profession’s historical record that bears this loss.

178. Elizabeth Anne Carlson, *Bibliography on Cataloging and Classification of Legal Materials*, 61 *LAW LIBR. J.* 259 (1968); Nancy E. Miller & Marie Whited, *Bibliography on Cataloging and Classification of Legal Materials—A Supplement, 1968–74*, 68 *LAW LIBR. J.* 307 (1975); Alva T. Stone & Jessie Tam, *Cataloging and Classification of Law Materials: A Survey of Recent Literature*, 83 *LAW LIBR. J.* 721 (1991).

179. *Online Bibliographic Services SIS [AALL Special Interest Section Recommended Reading Lists]*, 100 *LAW LIBR. J.* 736, 2008 *LAW LIBR. J.* 38; *Technical Services SIS, Cataloging and Classification [AALL Special Interest Section Recommended Reading Lists]*, 100 *LAW LIBR. J.* 751, 752, 2008 *LAW LIBR. J.* 42.