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EDI – What Is It? Why Should You Care?

By Shelley Neville
Technical Product Manager, Dynix

Electronic Dissemination of Information (EDI) is at its most basic the transmission of business data between two machines. It has been used in the retail world for years and years. Companies such as Wal-Mart mandated that any of their suppliers had to be able to receive orders electronically and to supply electronic invoices. The ability to transmit business data electronically helps all parties involved by saving time, postage, and data entry error. Remember how much time was saved with MARC when it was developed as a way to send and share bibliographic information electronically? EDI works in much the same way.

Before going into more detail about EDI, let’s discuss standards, providing a better idea of how and why standards are developed and why they are important.

The Development of Standards

As integrated library systems (ILS) have evolved from the early 1980s, they have been become integral to libraries to help manage their collections. Over the past 20 years, these systems have been expected to interface with external systems. These external systems can include other libraries, as well as hardware and software products, like book jobbers, serials subscription agents, the World Wide Web, etc. In order to communicate with these systems and devices, many ILS vendors’ products are designed to support and communicate using established library, computing, and network standards. In a Dynix Institute Web seminar, Marshall Breeding listed adherence to standards as one of the top 10 considerations in selecting a
library automation system because “standards protect the library’s investment in its data.”¹

ILS vendors love standards. They are very cost effective to implement. It is easier, faster, and cheaper to implement something once as opposed to creating proprietary interfaces with multiple third party vendors. ILS vendors are very involved in standards committees and in some cases when librarians cannot participate on the committee will represent both the library and their own interests.

Usually librarians and/or system vendors will recognize a need for standardized information or formats and suggestions are made to standards organizations such as National Information Standards Organizations (NISO) or Book Industry Standards and Communications (BISAC). These standards organizations review the suggestion and will appoint a committee chair who then gathers committee members. The committee chair and members are almost always volunteers who work on creating a standard in addition to their real job. Committee members are dedicated souls who believe strongly in the necessity of the standard they are working on. Anyone who has spent time on a standards committee will know that it can often be a long and painful process. Standards are always created with as much input as possible. Committee members take suggestions from anyone. Once the standard has been created it goes to a vote from the members of the standards organization. A maintenance agency is appointed to house and improve the standard. Once it has been approved it goes into an implementation phase where early adopters use the standard in their processes. Suggestions are made to improve the standard and the maintenance agency takes over to create the second version of the standard.

(Continued on p. 3)

The 11th Biennial OLAC Conference takes place October 1-3 in Montreal Canada. OLAC 2004 is all about connecting the global community to a multitude of formats. The conference’s ambitious schedule comes close to that grand plan, offering instruction and updates on the cataloging of music scores, CD-ROMS, still and moving images, videorecordings, electronic resources and oral history materials. Other sessions will focus on improving access using Genre/Form terms and the future of the GMD. Lynne Howath, Sheila Intner, and Allyson Carlyle’s panel discussion on Preparing 21st Century Cataloging and Metadata Professionals should be packed. A two-day SCCTP pre-conference on cataloging integrating resources is also being offered. To obtain information about the conference, or to register, visit http://mavweb.mnsu.edu/bothmr/OLAC/home.html.
Here is a real life example of this process. Acquisitions is an area where standards have been developed for the exchange of business data such as orders, claims, and invoices. This is covered very nicely by BISAC and the Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT). However, there are no standards for the movement of acquisitions data between libraries and vendors. Libraries tend to use a variety of workflows with no standard processes. The process may be the standard for the library, but not standard across the library community. ALA’s ALCTS Acquisitions Section Automated Acquisitions Discussion Group has met the last three ALA conferences to discuss a standard for library acquisitions data. Marc Truit from the University of Notre Dame created a discussion group called AUTOACQ-L to use as a forum for discussion of ideas and issues related to automation of library acquisitions and related processes. This has been a very active discussion group where it is very clear that a standard is needed. Right now the group is trying to determine standard processes before creating a container for the standard data.

**Specific EDI Standards**

Just as MARC has UniMARC, CanMARC, UKMARC, MARC21, etc., several different EDI formats have evolved over the years. The easiest way to understand these formats is to think about them as MARC for business data. The formats use a series of tags to identify what data goes where. They are shared easily between disparate systems provided both sides understand which format is used.

**BISAC** – The Book Industry Standards Advisory Committee created an electronic ordering standard in the 1980s. The BISAC communication standard is still used by many book jobbers and publishers in accepting and processing electronic orders created and sent by library systems. The BISAC standard accommodates orders and responses, but no invoice transaction set was ever developed.

**ANSI X12** – In the late 1980s and early 1990s, The Serials Industry Standards Advisory Committee (SISAC) and BISAC resolved to begin using the U.S. National protocol for electronic exchange of business information: ANSI X12. This included the invoice for both Serials and Monographs transaction set.

**EDIFACT** – The mapping of EDIFACT for book and serials information was defined by EDItEUR, an international standards group made up of representatives from the library, publishing, and booksellers industries, based in Europe. Four years ago BISAC resolved to use EDItEUR guidelines for implementing EDIFACT. The Internet Commerce Committee (a sub committee of BISAC) is currently working on mapping X12 and EDIFACT transactions sets to XML.
The Implementation of standards

It may appear that ILS vendors pick and chose which standards to implement. Actually that is fairly accurate. There are several factors ILS vendors consider in determining what standards to develop and deliver to our customers. Reviewing development priorities is an ongoing process for any ILS vendor. We look at what is going on in the market. We look at what exciting things our competitors are doing and what third party relationships help deliver features to customers. We also have active users groups who are constantly asking for features. We review what is coming through in RFPs (Requests for Proposals) and what is being committed contractually.

In addition, sometimes it is the standards process itself that determines what we implement. Some standards seem to take forever to get approved. What are some of the reasons for this? All standards are developed by committee, and the time it takes to accomplish work grows exponentially for each person added to the committee. Also members are volunteers who do this in addition to their own busy jobs. It can also be difficult to find two parties willing to play with similar implementation schedules. In reverse to this there are times when we are ready to exchange data with a third party vendor where there is no standard, and the process to get one completed takes too long. So while librarians are meeting in committee coming up with processes, ILS vendors may just be creating their own. While not a true standard, these vendor created ones often become defacto standards. Enriched EDIFACT did not go through any committees but is being used for libraries working with vendors who do full book processing.

So, What’s In It For You?

The true purpose of EDI is to save you time. The following transactions sets are the ones most commonly used in North American and all systems and materials vendors I’m aware of accommodate them.

1. Orders - The set includes all the order data you’ve painstakingly entered into your ILS. Once you’ve completed the order you can output an EDIFACT file and based on your library system, you will FTP, e-mail, or menu option the file to your vendor. Material vendors love getting electronic orders as it means they do not have to re-key all the data from a paper PO into their order system. You are able to get your orders into their systems more quickly and usually more accurately. Once they have received the order they are able to send you back...

2. Order Response - This transaction sends back details about any of the orders the vendor cannot fill. These can be uploaded into your local system to give you a quick and convenient way to immediately know what titles you are going to need to order from a different vendor.
3. **Enriched EDIFACT** - This allows libraries to specify item-specific information, such as barcode, collection, call number, etc. and receive this information back in the electronic order response, invoice, or MARC record (generally imbedded in the 9xx tag), if supported by the book jobber.

4. **Invoice** - Any one who has had to enter a 200-line invoice into their local system knows how tedious it can be. Loading an invoice electronically matches up the invoice lines to the orders and quickly builds an invoice automatically. What's left for staff is to review the invoice and then approve it.

EDI can work for every library. If you are not doing EDI, you need to start now because the time savings are significant. It may change some of your workflow, which can be painful. You might want to start small by sending test orders to your vendors to get the hang of the process.

EDI isn’t for every order you send to vendors. Some of your more esoteric orders which need to be filled by smaller vendors or publishers should be handled via phone, fax, or paper as these suppliers might not be able to accommodate an electronic order. But for the 80% of the time you are ordering titles, which can be filled by the larger materials vendors, EDI can be a beautiful thing.


**Standards URLs**

EDIFACT & ONIX  
http://www.editeur.org

BISAC & X12  
http://www.bisg.org

AUTOACQ-L archives  
http://listserv.nd.edu/archives/autoacq-l.html

**TS Division Election Results**

The ballots have been counted and the results are in. Roger Miller, the Manager of the Catalog Department at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, will be the Assistant Coordinator for the OLC Technical Services Division. The winners of the election for Action Council are Kathy Hughes from the State Library of Ohio and Maxine Sherman from the Cuyahoga County Public Library. Congratulations! The OLC Technical Services Division extends a big thank you to everyone who ran for office this year. It takes courage and generosity to volunteer to be a candidate. The division depends upon its members for its growth and future strength. Thank you!
Coordinator’s Corner -

I just filled out my ballot for the OLC election and even though it is July I am in Thanksgiving mode. (No. I’m not thankful that the year is half over and reinforcements are on the way!) I am very grateful that we work in a profession with so many wonderful people. Most people who work in libraries like to help others. Contrary to some “public” opinion, I have found that Technical Services staff members are often the most helpful group in any library. Acquisitions, cataloging, and processing are really all about sharing.

By the time you read this issue the election will be over. Half of the candidates on our ballot will be elected. Half will not. All of the candidates deserve our appreciation. They are offering a good measure of their time and talent to benefit their colleagues in Ohio. Sharing, again.

The Annual Conference is just around the corner. The Technical Services Division Action Council is very happy, bordering on ecstatic, about the number of technical services programs available at the conference this year. If you have not attended an Annual Conference in the past, 2004 would make a memorable first time experience. If you have attended an Annual Conference in the past, you will see at a glance why we are so pleased. There are several technical services programs offered every day. At least one program or talk table, and often two, offered in every time slot. Did I mention Lois Chan on Friday? Please mark your calendars for 9/30 and 10/1/2004. I’ll see you in Cincinnati!

-- Bonnie Doepker, Assistant Director for Technical Services, Dayton Metro Library

MARC 21 Concise Formats Available

This past month Jackie Radebaugh from the Network Development & MARC Standards Office at LC announced that the 2003 edition of the MARC 21 Concise Formats is now available at the Library of Congress (LC). According to Radebaugh the Concise Formats provides a quick reference guide to the content designators defined in each MARC format. “This new publication supersedes the 2002 edition of the MARC 21 Concise Formats. It includes changes from the 2003 update and is current with all five full editions of the MARC 21 formats.” The MARC 21 Concise Formats (ISBN 0-8444-1109-4) text is available in loose-leaf format with binder and tabs for $50. The text, not including the binder and tabs, is also available for $40. For more information visit http://www.loc.gov/cds/marcdoc.html. The formats are also available for viewing on the Web at http://www.loc.gov/marc/.
CatExpress – More than Just AV Records

By Donna Schroeder
OCLC Services Coordinator, OHIONET

Every so often I get a question from someone about how to do deletions and when I mention using the Express tab in Connexion, they usually say “Isn’t that just for getting AV records?” Or the other question I get frequently is “Isn’t that service going away because we have the client now?” Using the Express tab is a great way to get to AV records. After all, it is an interface to WorldCat, one of the richest and largest bibliographic databases in existence. And the interface is fun and easy to use and doesn’t require a lot of training. To answer the second question, CatExpress is not going away. It will continue to be available to subscribers and to full members who can take advantage of the service’s offerings.

CatExpress is the name given to the subscription service that accesses WorldCat. The tab in Connexion that CatExpress subscribers use is called Express. It was started several years ago as a way to offer small libraries a less expensive way to use WorldCat, yet still get the same quality records that full members can access. Members who use another interface such as the client or the browser may also use the Express tab. Regular cataloging charges apply for searching and exporting. It costs $0.451 for each search and $0.49 to export the record. For those not familiar with the interface, it offers two ways to see the record: text and MARC. A person new to MARC can see a record first as text and then as MARC later on helping them to understand MARC coding. Staff that may not regularly catalog but help out when needed could use the text version without having to have all the different tags explained to them. Information such as summary note, general note, call number, and price may be added to the record but no corrections, deletions, or other additional information such as subjects may be added. Changes such as additional subjects or typographical errors to the record will need to happen after the record is in the library’s local system.

There are two ways to get your records into your local system. One way is to Save to catalog. To use this, your library needs to have an EDX subscription set up. If your library does batch holdings or gets PromptCat records then an EDX account is already set up for you. When you Save to catalog the records are delivered overnight. The other way is to Export the records. This is different from the exporting you may be used to doing when using the client or the browser. The records are appended to a file and then exported in a batch. If your library needs to use the 949 tag for information then your local system must map that information from an 852 field to the 949 field. CatExpress does not allow a 949 tag to be added. Saving the record to the catalog or exporting the record sets the holdings automatically. There is no need to remember a separate function to do so.
I mentioned earlier about using the *Express tab* for deleting holdings. A volunteer, student, or non-cataloger can be very easily taught how to delete holdings. Armed with the information needed such as an OCLC number, ISBN or title, anyone can use the basic search screen to call up the item. If the item is held by the library, the delete holdings button will appear. All you need to do to delete the holdings is to click on the button. Once done you can go back to the search screen and enter another search. Nothing else needs to be done. If the record is not held by the library, the delete holdings button will not appear. With a minimum amount of training, anyone can delete holdings easily thereby increasing the value of your library’s collection to the wider library community. Deleting holdings helps you serve your customer better.

I am sure many of you have heard about subscription cataloging and would like to know what it is. Today many school, public, and industrial libraries have subscriptions to CatExpress. The size of the subscription depends on the number of items the library would like to catalog. Today there are several levels ranging from 250 to 7,000. Libraries in a consortium can get even higher levels.

Many libraries do originally start out to get CatExpress strictly for AV records. Many times libraries have expressed frustration that they can find records for books using other services but not for videos and sound recordings. During demonstrations at libraries I have searched for stacks of items that the catalogers were going to have to do original records for and found bibliographic records for them already available in WorldCat. The number of AV records in WorldCat makes it truly enticing for those having difficulty in finding AV records. One librarian expressed delight upon finding record after record, realizing that she no longer had to create originals for AV but could spend her time creating records for those local items needed by the wider community. Beyond AV in WorldCat are books, serials, electronic resources, maps, and realia.

For CatExpress libraries, the only drawback to using the Express tab is that they cannot create original records. They either must do the originals in-house or have someone outside their library known as a cataloging agent catalog the original items for them.

CatExpress is here to stay. Its easy-to-use interface can be used by smaller libraries on a subscription basis or by full members who want a quick and easy way to delete holdings or add records to their in-house system. Now when you hear someone say that CatExpress is for AV only or that it is going away you can say that CatExpress is here to stay and that it can be used for more than just AV. It accesses the same wonderful WorldCat used by browser and client users.
OLC Annual Conference Features Full Technical Services Track

September 29 - October 1, 2004
Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza

This year’s OLC Annual features something very special for Technical Services Librarians – a full slate of programs that are specifically geared toward their interests. Don’t forget to also check out all of the wonderful conference speakers like keynote speaker Nancy Pearl, the former Director of the Washington Center for the Book and the inspiration for the Archie McPhee librarian action figure, or Toni Garvey, Director of the Phoenix Public Library and *Library Journal’s* 2004 Librarian of the Year.

**RFID for You and Me!** – Don Barlow, Westerville Public Library, Steve Wood, Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

**From Notebooks to Bookmarks: Cataloging the Information Flood** – Dan Liebtag, Fairfield County District Library, Donna Schroeder, OHIONET

**System Migration: Can you Manage it?** – Randy Bergdorp, Peninsula Library and Historical Society, Mary Beth Brestel, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Joshua Ferraro, Nelsonville Public Library, Dan Liebtag, Fairfield County District Library, Patricia Lowrey, Cleveland Public Library, James H. Mann (Moderator), Greene County Public Library.

**AV Vendors: What to Expect and How to Get it** – Steve Smith, Recorded Books, LLC and Eric Trimm, Midwest Tapes.

**New ILS – New ACQ?: An Acquisitions Talk Table** – Jessica Bushore, Greene County Public Library, Bonnie Doepker, Dayton Metro Library

**Binding: A necessary Line Item?** – Jim Schearer, ICI Binding Corporation

**Metadata and Subject Access** – Lois M. Chan, Ph.D., School of Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky.

**More Voices from the Basement: What’s Bugging You as a Cataloger?** – Dan Liebtag, Fairfield County District Library.

**Will There Always be a Technical Services Professional?** – Lois M. Chan, Ph.D., School of Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky and La Donna Riddle Weber, Ball State University.

To see complete program times and information visit [http://www.olc.org/TSTrack.pdf](http://www.olc.org/TSTrack.pdf).

For complete conference and registration information visit [http://www.olc.org/ann_conf.asp](http://www.olc.org/ann_conf.asp)

By Jennifer L. Mann

*Maxwell’s handbook for AACR2: Explaining and Illustrating the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules Through the 2003 Update* by Robert L. Maxwell is designed to be used alongside the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (AACR2) as a supplement that clarifies each rule. Maxwell, with expertise that also extends to authority work, wrote for both library school students and experienced catalogers. In the handbook, each AACR2 rule is explained and full cataloging examples are included to illustrate the rules and help bridge the gap between the AACR2 rules and the MARC 21 format.

In order to facilitate referencing back and forth between the AACR2 and the handbook, the chapter numbers for “Part I: Description in AACR2” are identical in the handbook. While the chapters of “Part II: Headings, Uniform Titles and References” are given consecutive chapter numbers in the handbook, they are then labeled with the AACR2 chapter numbers. In addition, each explanation of a rule in the handbook is numbered identically with the AACR2 rule number. The result is that it is very easy to look up a puzzling AACR2 rule in the handbook for further explanation and illustrations with just the rule number.

The text of the handbook includes clarifying discussion as well as such information as why there are some differences in practice between the participants of AACR2. For example, the United Kingdom uses a shorter, more general list of General Material Designations while other Anglo-American libraries use a longer second list because the different systems couldn’t agree on a single list. The author also includes in his discussions information such as whether an area is being studied by the Joint Steering Committee for the AACR2 at the time the handbook was being written so the reader will know to be alert for changes. Other topics include what is needed for the three levels of description, the history of a particular rule and MARC 21 coding conventions. References also steer readers to other sections of the handbook or AACR2 that may be useful by providing additional information on a topic. Additionally, an index is provided that includes references to both text and specific examples.

The examples are an important feature of the handbook and take up approximately 50% of the volume of the text. Most examples are of printed
books in the English language because in the author’s experience they comprise the majority of items catalogued in today’s libraries. However, some examples of electronic resources and other non-print items are given. There are several features of the examples in the handbook that make them especially valuable for translating the AACR2 rules into practice. For example, transcriptions of prescribed sources of information such as the title page and verso of a book are included to illustrate how to transfer the information from a prescribed source to a cataloguing record. In addition, since the MARC 21 format is most commonly used, the cataloguing record examples are given in the MARC 21 format, complete with indicators, sub-field codes, and punctuation.

Maxwell’s handbook will be a very useful tool in helping those new to cataloguing as well as catalogers experienced in using the AACR2 rules to transcribe information.

**ISBN 13**

The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is being expanded from 10 digits to 13 digits, chiefly because we are running out of ISBN numbers to assign to new materials. The new number will be identical to the UCC/EAN-13 barcode that currently appears on books. The change is also happening at the same time that the United States system of 12-digit UPC barcodes will migrate to the UCC/EAN-13 international standard.

(Continued on p. 12)

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**ISBN 13 Implementation Timeline**

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<td>May 2004</td>
<td>OCLC Announces Interim Support for ISBN 13</td>
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The International ISBN Agency will publish final standards for ISBN 13 early in 2005 and has stipulated full adoption by the entire book industry by 2007. The Library of Congress’ (LC) interim plans for implementation of ISBN 13 will include the presence of ISBN 13s and ISBN 10s in some records beginning in October 2004. When viewing printed CIP information in books, catalogers may begin to see the ISBN 13 first and then the ISBN-10, each preceded by a print constant:

ISBN-13: 978-1-873671-00-0  
ISBN-10: 1-873671-008

LC will input the pairs of ISBNs “by manifestation in repeated MARC21 020 fields, with the ISBN 13 input preceding the ISBN 10.” (LC)

020 $a 9781873671000  
020 $a 1873671008

OCLC will not implement ISBN quite as seamlessly because their resources are currently focused on implementing their new system/database platform. During the interim OCLC libraries creating original records on WorldCat the 13 digit ISBN will be stored in the 024 Other Standard Number field with a first indicator of “3” indicating that the number is an EAN (International Article Number).

020 $a 1873671008  
024 3 $a 9781873671000

These numbers can be accessed in WorldCat via the Standard Number index, but “ISBN-13 numbers will not be retrievable using the ISBN index during this interim period.” OCLC plans to add support for the ISBN-13 in the 020 field once implementation of their new system is completed.

Our local integrated library systems will need to adapt to the ISBN 13 as well. Indexing systems should be able to search all 13 digits in order to guarantee access to new materials by ISBN. OCLC libraries that index the 024 and the 020 in the same index may not need to edit records locally, but for other libraries a plan should be devised for migrating ISBN 13s to the 020. Remember that there may already be EAN data in this field that should be retained. And don’t forget that acquisitions data structures will also need to be adapted to accommodate the extra 3 digits. Your ILS vendor should already be working to implement ISBN 13.

**Links to ISBN 13 related sites:**

Guidelines for the Implementation of 13-digit ISBNS  

By Jennifer B. Baker

When the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR asked the American Library Association to draft an appendix that would explain the differences between major and minor changes in bibliographic records and the consequent reasons for new record creation, the Association formed the Task Force on an Appendix of Major and Minor Changes. This group studied and discussed manifestation-level records for single-part monographs, multi-part monographs, integrating resources, and serials. The result: a concise guidebook that details when to create a new record for an item in hand, and when to use what is already there.

For the beginning cataloger, or for someone who juggles cataloging with other professional tasks, this publication is invaluable. The compactness and organization of the book enable quick discovery of guidelines or rules that are sometimes intuitive and other times obscured in the pages of AACR2. Additionally, the Task Force provides numerous examples of major and minor changes that suggest what should be done with the item in hand.
For seasoned catalogers, *Differences Between, Changes Within* is a fine reference that complements (and, in some cases, surpasses) the information provided in OCLC Bib Formats and Standards’ “When to Input a New Record.”

Following Part 1, “General Guidelines,” and Part 2, “Basic Guidelines,” the book tackles “Specific Guidelines” on when to create new records for monographs, integrating resources, and serials. Each format is handled individually (monographs and serials are further divided into specific areas of address) and the elements determining major and minor changes are discussed in the order of a standard MARC record. Part 4 comprises a handy set of charts that effectively summarize what is explicitly detailed in Part 3, “Specific Guidelines.”

*Differences Between, Changes Within* is available freely on the Web to members of ALCTS at [http://www.ala.org/alcts](http://www.ala.org/alcts).

**What is FRBR?** LC’s Cataloging Distribution service has published a small but useful pamphlet on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) model. The pamphlet was written by Barbara Tillett who is Chief, Cataloging Policy & Support Office, Library of Congress and current Chair of the IFLA Cataloguing Section. *What is FRBR?: A Conceptual Model for the Bibliographic Universe* provides information on the background of the FRBR model, an explanation of the terms used (work, expression, manifestation & item) and a discussion of the relationships between different groups of FRBR entities. There is an absolutely stunning graphic entitled the *Family of Works* that explores the bibliographic relationships between different expressions of a work versus new works as well a good discussion of whole/part and part to part relationships. Find, identify, select, and obtain, the four user tasks defined in the FRBR model are also explored. A good description of the potential impacts of the model on cataloging rules, bibliographic structures and systems design concludes the pamphlet. For more information on *What is FRBR?* Visit [http://lcweb.loc.gov/cds/FRBR.html](http://lcweb.loc.gov/cds/FRBR.html). Printed versions are available for a reasonable cost. There is also a PDF version to be downloaded and printed.

**Check it out! Authority Tutorial**
[http://www.lib.usm.edu/~techserv/pdc/auth_tutorial/index.htm](http://www.lib.usm.edu/~techserv/pdc/auth_tutorial/index.htm)

I was recently alerted to the existence of this good but basic refresher on the MARC Authority format by a colleague. Created by Kathleen L. Wells and Nashaat Sayed at the University of Southern Mississippi Libraries, the Authority Tutorial is based on the LC publication *Understanding MARC Authority Records*. The tutorial does not take long to experience and you don’t have to be a cataloger to understand it. There are review questions, sample records and a very nice glossary of terms. Check it out!
Technical Services = User Services
OVGTSL Conference is a Pleasant Immersion in Technical Services Librarianship

By Margaret Maurer, Cataloging Manager
Kent State University Libraries and Media Services

This year’s Ohio Valley Group of Technical Services Librarians (OVGTSL) conference was the first one I have attended, and was much anticipated. Known regionally for years, OVGTSL has a good reputation for conference content. It used to be referred to by its initials -- O-V-G-T-S-L -- and more recently has been mythologized as “Ov-Gotsel.”

OVGTSL is a total immersion in technical services librarianship. Surrounded by like-minded librarians discussing projects and topics I was truly interested in, OVGTSL turned out to be very affirming, validating, a great learning experience, a lot of fun, and an easy conference to enjoy.

Much smaller than national conferences, this regional gem offers networking opportunities for librarians from Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, the three states that the conference is alternately hosted by. Its local focus helps it remain affordable. The smaller size also allows for plenty of access to the various presenters at the conference.

This year the conference was held in May in Louisville, Kentucky, hosted by the University of Louisville Libraries. OVGTSL is structured uniquely with time set aside for three keynote addresses alternating with concurrent sessions. Conferees therefore have common experiences but can then tailor other parts of the conference to their own needs. While a greater proportion of those attending worked in academic libraries, public librarians were present in strong numbers, and some of the presenters were from public libraries, even quite small ones.

This year’s theme, Technical Services = User Services allowed for plenty of diversity in program offerings. The first keynote address, Fast Times in Technical Services: Learn it. Know it. Love it. featured Janet Swan Hill, Associate Director for Technical Services, University of Colorado Libraries at Boulder. Hill reprised some of the themes she focused on at last year’s Mohican conference, but also connected the audience to their core values as librarians. She urged her listeners to become politically involved in library organizations outside of technical services, to ask librarians from outside of technical services to serve on our working groups and to promote
organizational change that removes the barriers from between different kinds of librarians. Lee Van Orsdel, Dean of Libraries, Eastern Kentucky University presented *Useful Anger: Fighting for the User in the War over Scholarly Communications*. She is an inspired crusader for bringing down the costs of professional journals, stating that the academy can no longer afford to buy the product it creates. Her presentation was informative and very timely. The final keynote address, *What’s FRBR and Why do I Care?* was presented by Glenn Patton, Director, Worldcat Content Management Division, OCLC. Patton provided the practical context as well as the theoretical backdrop needed to understand FRBR. Typical concurrent sessions provided information on rush ordering ILL requests, generating bibliographic records from Serials Solutions’ A-Z list, and digitization projects.

In 2005 OVGTS will be held on May 11 through 13, hosted by Denison University near Granville, OH. Kevin Furniss from Dennison chairs the conference committee. I have heard rumors that the fabulous Cherry Valley Inn will be the featured location. Mark your calendars for an informative and enjoyable conference.

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It was recently announced by Jackie Radebaugh (Network Development & MARC Standards Office at LC) that the second edition of *Understanding MARC Authority Records* is now available. This publication introduces the MARC 21 authority format and includes “...comprehensive information and descriptions of MARC 21 authority records along with many useful examples and a bibliography for further reading.” *Understanding MARC Authority Records* is available from the Cataloging Distribution Service, with 1-24 copies at $5 each, packs of 25 copies for $60 per pack and boxes of 100 copies at $100 per box. Visit [http://www.loc.gov/cds/marcdoc.html](http://www.loc.gov/cds/marcdoc.html) for more information.