

## **Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control Inaugural Meeting, November 3, 2006**

Meeting Summary, Decisions, and Action Items

### **I. Background and context**

Dr. José-Marie Griffiths, Dean of the School of Library and Information Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and chair of the Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control, chaired the meeting. Dr. Griffiths opened the meeting and asked Deanna Marcum, Associate Librarian of Congress for Library Services, to provide some background information about the purposes of the Working Group.

Dr. Marcum began by thanking the participants for agreeing to join the Working Group, which is taking on an incredibly important assignment at a time when libraries all over the United States find it necessary to confront fundamental issues concerning the future direction of bibliographic access to meet user needs. A particularly salient issue is how, and to what extent, libraries can fit with the world of search engines. She believes that libraries exist to connect people with content; therefore the challenge for libraries is how to make the library experience easier for users and how to serve users more directly. A wide range of library literature makes it clear that users consider library catalogs antiquated and not very user-friendly. She had found that LC catalogers, when asked to face this reality, tended to have two responses: first, agreement that users have difficulty using the catalog; and second, that the catalog is actually better than most users realize, if only librarians would educate users.

Dr. Marcum reviewed some recent steps LC had taken to improve its ability to meet user needs for bibliographic access. In July 2004, LC combined its former acquisitions and cataloging operations in a single administrative unit, the new Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate. This was an early step in streamlining technical processing. The ABA Directorate is now in the process of thoroughly restructuring in order to improve timeliness of access, better integrate the processing of digital content, increase productivity, and increase the directorate's flexibility in the future. In April 2006, LC announced that it intended to cease providing series authority control on quite short notice. (The original announcement stated that LC would cease creating or maintaining series authority records on May 1, 2006; the date was postponed to June 1, 2006, in response to community concerns.) Dr. Marcum said that the short notice and poor communication of the LC decision had made it unnecessarily hard for other libraries to adjust their operations in light of this decision. She had therefore met with the presidents and vice-presidents/presidents-elect of all American Library Association divisions during the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans in June to hear their concerns. She found that ALA was the library body that had the gravest concerns about the series decision and about LC's wider intentions for the future of bibliographic control; when she held a similar discussion at the Conference of Directors of National Libraries, held in conjunction with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' World Library and Information Congress in August, the directors of other nations' libraries did not consider series control a major issue. Her

discussions at ALA and CDNL had led Dr. Marcum to form the Working Group, because she saw that the community's concern was not simply over a single changed policy, but over the entire direction of bibliographic control and the Library of Congress's role in it. Dr. Marcum noted that LC has no specific funding for sharing bibliographic control with other libraries, and Congress has asked the Library of Congress to analyze its base budget and demonstrate efficiencies before it requests additional funding.

Dr. Marcum said that her service unit, Library Services, had drafted and was currently elaborating a strategic plan for the fiscal years 2008 through 2013. The second goal in the plan, "Provide the most effective methods for connecting the Library user to our collections," was squarely tied to bibliographic control. Library Services had formed forty staff working groups in furtherance of the strategic plan. Bruce Knarr was coordinating the working group tasked to "Set new policies for the type of information and services needed to find and manage items in the Library's collection, including work in digital formats." Adrienne Cannon was coordinator of the working group to "increase the accessibility of the Library's special collections through bibliographic description or finding aids," a task that contemplated making finding aids part of the Library's bibliographic apparatus. Dr. Marcum considered this extremely important, considering that of the roughly 132 million items in the Library of Congress collections, probably no more than 15 million are represented by bibliographic records in the LC Online Catalog.

Dr. Marcum recalled that at the recent Digital Library Federation meeting, Judith Nadler had said that we should not try to fix existing systems; rather, we should try to pretend that we had just arrived on Earth from Mars, so that we could consider how we would create systems of bibliographic access if we were unencumbered by the past. Dr. Marcum said this was very important, although we are indeed encumbered by past systems.

Dr. Marcum said that she hoped to attend all meetings of the Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control to be a listener, booster, and resource, but that Dr. Griffiths and the group would work independently. A number of conferences on bibliographic control have occurred in the past several years, but not much had been accomplished. The Working Group had an opportunity to create the future and Dr. Marcum was pleased that its members were willing to try.

## **II. Introductions**

Dr. Marcum introduced the Library of Congress staff whom she had asked to help the Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control: Deputy Associate Librarian for Library Services Robert Dizard, Jr.; his special assistant, Jennifer Somosky; Director for ABA Beacher Wiggins; his assistant, Susan Morris; Bruce Knarr, Computer Files and Microforms Team leader; Allene Hayes, digital projects coordinator for the ABA Directorate; Library Services Executive Secretariat Beth Davis-Brown; Tom Yee, assistant chief of the Cataloging Policy and Support Office; and Dr. Adrienne Cannon, African-American history and culture specialist in the Manuscript Division.

Members of the Working Group introduced themselves. Chair Dr. José-Marie Griffiths said she was not a cataloger, but as a library science educator, she had an interest in cataloging issues. She recalled the limited world of information retrieval in the 1970s, when in the United Kingdom there was only one conference each year that both researchers and vendors attended. The library public are now self-aware users of information services, and younger people have quite different information-using habits from those of the past.

Judith Nadler, director of libraries and university librarian at the University of Chicago, has joined the Working Group as a representative of the Association of Research Libraries. Her background is in cataloging and cataloging management.

Diane Dates Casey, dean of library services and academic computing at Governors State University, University Park, Illinois, has been a librarian for fifteen years. She is a former chair of the Subject Analysis Committee of ALCTS (the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services, an ALA division) and now represents ALCTS on the ALA Council.

Clifford Lynch, executive director of the Coalition for Networked Information, is a computer scientist, not a librarian, but he worked on building online library catalogs in the 1980s. He is interested in how descriptive practices translate into access practices, particularly in the current environment where increasingly we must describe physical objects that have digital counterparts.

Daniel Clancy is engineering director of Google Book Search. He holds a doctorate in computer science and formerly headed the information sciences and technology directorate at the NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California.

Lorcan Dempsey is vice president for research and chief strategist at OCLC, Inc. He now also manages RLG Programs within the OCLC Office of Research. He said that OCLC is interested in supporting how things develop in search and access over time.

Janet Swan Hill began her library career as a map cataloger at the Library of Congress and is now associate director for technical services at the University of Colorado Libraries. Her map cataloging background gave her an understanding of users' needs for materials that are not included in a library's main catalog. She said that if a conference on the future of bibliographic control is to succeed, its organizers must pay attention to what she called "earthling content"--the things that make people want to join forces with them. She distributed two papers, "LC and Us" and an excerpt from her forthcoming article "Is It Worth It? Management Issues Related to Database Quality."

Olivia Madison is dean of the library at Iowa State University. She has a strong background in cataloging and later gained a public service perspective when she became associate dean of libraries at ISU. She is a former president of ALCTS and chaired the IFLA Working Group on Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records.

Brian Schottlaender is university librarian at the University of California, San Diego and immediate past president of ARL. Within ALA, he chaired the ALCTS Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access and served as the ALA representative to the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR. He is a past chair of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging and chaired the Cooperative Cataloging Council task group that developed the concept of the core-level record. He noted the importance of maintaining a sensitivity to the politics of cataloging.

Richard Amelung is associate director of the Omer Poos Law Library of St. Louis University and has been active in the Program for Cooperative Cataloging for many years. He represents the American Association of Law Libraries on the Working Group.

Dr. Rebecca Green is an associate professor at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies and attended the meeting to assist Dr. Griffiths.

Sally Smith has been a public librarian for five years and is manager of cataloging and processing for the King County (Washington) Library System. She previously worked at the Washington Library Network (WLN) as head of that utility's MARC Record Service, performing retrospective conversion and authority processing services. She represents the Public Library Association, a division of ALA, on the Working Group.

John Latham, substituting for Gary Price, represented the Special Libraries Association, which has an extremely varied membership with a large proportion of corporate libraries. Gary Price is the editor of ResourceShelf.com and works for Ask.com.

Robert (Bob) Wolven is director of library systems and bibliographic control at Columbia University Libraries. He has a strong interest in the dynamics of cataloging and represents the Program for Cooperative Cataloging on the Working Group.

Jay Giroto was ill and unable to attend this meeting. He hopes to participate in future meetings as a representative of the Microsoft Corporation.

Dr. Griffiths suggested that Dr. Marcum invite NFAIS, the National Federation of Abstracting and Indexing Services, to name a representative to the Working Group.

### **III. Adoption of Working Group's charge**

Starting with a draft charge offered by Dr. Marcum, the members of the Working Group discussed its charge. At the close of this day-long meeting, the Working Group confirmed the following text as its charge:

Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control

The Working Group will:

1. Present findings on how bibliographic control and other descriptive practices can

effectively support management of and access to library materials in the evolving information and technology environment;

2. Recommend ways in which the library community can collectively move toward achieving this vision; and

3. Advise the Library of Congress on its role and priorities.

#### **IV. Plan and desired outcomes for invitational meetings on future of bibliographic control**

The Working Group discussed how to involve the larger library and information communities in a national conversation on the future direction of bibliographic control. Some constraints and parameters included the heavy schedule of events scheduled for 2007 at the ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, including events to honor the fiftieth anniversary of ALCTS; the fact that the Library of Congress is unable to offer funding for participants to travel to a summit meeting; the three major conferences already scheduled for June 2007 (the SLA annual conference in Denver, June 3-6; ALA Annual in Washington, June 21-27; and the Joint Conference on Digital Libraries in Vancouver, June 17-23); and the critical importance of ensuring that all voices in the community have a chance to be heard. The Working Group therefore concluded that, rather than planning a single summit meeting on the future of bibliographic control, it would schedule several regional meetings during 2007. These meetings will follow the model used by the Section 108 Study Group. (The Section 108 Study Group was convened under the aegis of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP), and co-sponsored by the U.S. Copyright Office, in the spring of 2005. The group, which was named after the section of the U.S. Copyright Act that provides limited exceptions for libraries and archives, was to prepare findings and make recommendations to the Librarian of Congress by late 2006 on possible revisions of the law that reflect reasonable uses of copyrighted works by libraries and archives in the digital age. In addition to its own working meetings, the Section 108 Study Group held public roundtables on both coasts and solicited written or emailed comments. The transcripts of the public roundtable meetings and the written and emailed comments are available on the Section 108 Study Group Web site.)

Lorcan Dempsey suggested that other national libraries and the copyright deposit libraries of the United Kingdom be included in the topical focus meetings. Dr. Marcum said she would be happy to bring these libraries into the discussion. She noted that the cataloging services managers of the British Library, Library and Archives Canada, National Library of Australia, and LC have met semiannually for several years to discuss issues of mutual concern.

The Working Group agreed to plan three meetings in 2007. The venues will be in or near large airports in different regions of the U.S., in order to make it easier for participants to travel to the meetings and to elicit a broad range of perspectives. The Working Group then turned to discussion of desired outcomes for the meetings and what individuals and communities should be invited.

#### **V. Schedule and structure of topical focus meetings**

The Working Group brainstormed a list of topics that should be addressed in any discussion of the future of bibliographic control. The thirty-six topics thus identified are listed below, grouped into categories suggested by Dr. Green. The categories are shown in brackets.

[technology]

- making use and making sense of fragmented set of systems for access provision (result is too many search protocols)
- mixing with other (diverse) services / catalogs (e.g., libraries/museums/archives)
- enhanced data; clunky systems; how do you make them work?
- making data work harder
- using technology to enhance and automate what's done manually
- lack of shared understanding of what technology is needed for & what it is capable of
- libraries' ability to influence system enhancements

[metadata]

- impact of availability of full-text on a system that is based on surrogates
- uses of metadata beyond access/discovery (rights; storage [dimensionality])
- rights management, especially in view of U.S. Copyright Office at LC; must be built on base of bibliographic data
- rights to the metadata itself
  - controlled vocabulary/subject analysis; authorities (when do you want to choose from a list?); taxonomies / structured classification organization; interoperability
- sharing of authority data beyond library community; in future, libraries may want controlled terms in more elements, e.g. publishers' names

[standards]

- design and organization of bibliographic apparatus (MARC, FRBR, RDA, etc.)
- standards process; coordination of standards activity

[materials]

- managing similarities and differences across collections
- what do we mean by library materials? different strategies for different kinds of materials?
- management and preservation of artifacts

[people/workforce]

- workforce demographics issue: catalogers at retirement age
- workforce capacity and flexibility

[users]

- characteristics of users and of uses: who they are, what they need? (not just end users)
- description/classification of user communities
- identification of end users/identification vs. privacy
- end users increasingly using non-library systems to find library resources

users have been trained in non-library environments

[research]

lack of real research on users and their needs/impact of individual practices;  
decisions made by intuition

[scope]

what is needed to support multilingual discovery? international cataloging  
global/international impact  
local practice; optimize locally or system-wide

[organizational roles]

co-dependency of libraries and LC in light of changing needs and resources  
role of government in facilitating this  
success of Wikipedia: why aren't we letting the community be the authority?;  
what is the right role of input from "outside"?  
role of vendors, publishers  
partnership with commercial entities; role of the four large search engines ("fantasy" that  
search engines do a good job of meeting user needs)  
libraries need to expose/disclose their materials to others' environments  
migration of traditional bibliographic objects outside libraries, e.g. Amazon, GraceNotes

[economics]

understanding of economics and costs; savings, transfer of cost, workflow,  
sourcing; costs of "churn" (e.g., maintenance, installation of new releases)  
offsite storage and space management  
costs of interoperability vs. separate systems for search terms

The Working Group considered issues surrounding re-use of library content and metadata by commercial entities to be outside the scope of its charge.

The group accepted Dr. Dempsey's grouping of the topics into three broad categories: Uses and Users, Structures and Standards, and Economics and Organization. Each category will be the focus of one regional meeting in 2007. The meetings will be preceded by distribution of a background paper that gives an overview of the current environment in which bibliographic control operates. In July or August, after the three meetings have taken place, the Working Group will meet again to draft a report and recommendations by September 1 for public comments, which will be taken into account in the Working Group's final report, to be issued by November 1, 2007. Dr. Marcum offered to supply a writer at Library of Congress expense. In addition, LC will establish a Web site and an electronic discussion list for the Working Group.

The Working Group agreed that each member should participate in planning, publicity, and logistics for one of the three topical focus meetings. In addition, the planning groups will determine the invitation list and draft agendas for their respective meetings. The outcomes of the meetings will be cumulative, with the content of each meeting informing the next. Following the

Section 108 Study Group model, the planning groups will invite participants to speak in response to questions that are publicized beforehand. Speakers will be assigned a time to speak, but all will be invited to stay for the entire meeting. The day after the public topical focus meeting, the planning group will meet to review what was learned at the meeting. The topical focus meetings are presented below, with their planning group members, dates, and locations.

Uses and Users of Bibliographic Control: February 2007, Oakland, California

Planning group members are Dan Clancy, José-Marie Griffiths, Cliff Lynch, Olivia Madison, Gary Price (or John Latham), and Sally Smith. Jay Giroto, who was absent, will also be invited to join the Oakland planning group.

Structures and Standards for Bibliographic Control: April 2007, O'Hare International Airport, Chicago, Illinois. Planning group members are Richard Amelung, Diane Dates Casey, Lorcan Dempsey, José-Marie Griffiths, Cliff Lynch, and Brian Schottlaender. Judy Nadler also offered to participate in logistical planning since she is at the University of Chicago.

Economics and Organization of Bibliographic Control: June 2007, Dulles International Airport, near Washington, D.C. Planning group members are Lorcan Dempsey, José-Marie Griffiths, Janet Swan Hill, Cliff Lynch, Judy Nadler, and Bob Wolven.

## **VI. Specific plans for Oakland meeting**

Since the meeting at Oakland International Airport in February will be the first topical focus meeting, Dr. Griffiths proposed that the Working Group use the remaining time on November 3 to outline how the meeting in Oakland would proceed. All agreed that before the February meeting, invited participants should be encouraged to read some background papers on the environment and user requirements for bibliographic control. Suggested papers are: the OCLC Environmental Scan, "Pattern Recognition"; the Danish National Library report on library users; the report of the latest OutSell survey of libraries; findings from the Pew Internet and American Life Project; statistical information on libraries' cataloging behavior, e.g. use of shelf-ready services vs. original cataloging; and information about how people use Google. Dan Clancy said the last item will be primarily anecdotal since systematic research has not been done yet. In addition, Dr. Griffiths offered to provide preliminary findings from the 6,000-household survey recently carried out with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Issues to be addressed at the Oakland meeting include: defining user requirements; defining partners for libraries in the enterprise of providing bibliographic control; inventory management vs. access; possibilities and implications of multilingual discovery (this topic is also relevant for the two later meetings); strategic direction in choosing one system vs. multiple systems; how to get data to work harder for people (this topic is also relevant for the two later meetings); defining "library materials"; and relationships with museums, the ONIX community, and the book trade.

The Working Group agreed that the choice of a facilitator for the Oakland meeting and

the decision whether to permit observers, such as local library science students, would be made later. The planning group will draft invitations and make clear that there can be no monetary reimbursement for the participants or support for their travel expenses.

The invitation list should include developers of front-end search interfaces such as Endeca and specialists in user requirements for the next generation of catalogs. Ms. Hill stressed that the meeting needed to include more than catalogers and system architects; it must also include librarians who are interested in people and those interested in non-traditional or unique materials. At Dr. Lynch's suggestion, the Library of Congress will provide statistics on the composition of the LC collections and what percentage of each format is represented in the LC Online Catalog. This information will help the planning group determine the invitation list and the questions to be addressed, since the relative proportions of published materials and unique items is highly relevant to this discussion. As Ms. Madison pointed out, usage of special collections is increasing and such use generally has to be on-site in the library.

## **VII. Plans for press release**

John Sayers of the Library of Congress Public Affairs Office joined the meeting near the end of the day. Dr. Griffiths summarized the day's deliberations and decisions for him. Library Services staff will work with the Public Affairs Office to draft a press release describing the charge, membership, and plans of the Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control. All Working Group members will have an opportunity to review the press release before it is issued to the media.

## **VIII. Closing remarks**

Dr. Marcum expressed her gratitude to all members of the Working Group for both their knowledge and their equanimous temperaments. She had found the inaugural meeting tremendously helpful and pledged her support to help the Working Group's efforts.

Dr. Griffiths undertook to draft a timeline showing desired milestones and target dates for meeting them. She thanked all participants and observers for their attendance and contributions. She said that the Working Group would welcome input from the Library of Congress.

## **IX. Action items**

- 1) Working Group members will inform José-Marie Griffiths of any dates in February, April, and June 2007 when they are not available to attend their assigned topical focus meetings. Dr. Griffiths will work with the planning group members to set final dates for the three meetings in Oakland, Chicago O'Hare, and Washington Dulles.
- 2) Dr. Marcum will contact national librarians in other Anglo-heritage countries and U.K. copyright libraries to inform them of the topical focus meetings and invite their participation.

- 3) Dr. Marcum will invite NFAIS to name a representative to the Working Group.
- 4) Dr. Marcum will designate an LC staff member as the Working Group secretariat and will provide a writer for the findings of the three topical focus meetings and for the Working Group's report.
- 5) The LC secretariat will ensure the creation of a public Web site and a closed electronic discussion list for the Working Group. The Web site will include background reading for invited participants in the three topical focus meetings planned for 2007.
- 6) The LC Secretariat for the Working Group will provide a statistical overview of the composition of the LC collections as described in Section VI above, and a statistical overview of the production and time expended in various cataloging activities, e.g. authority control, subject analysis.
- 7) The Library of Congress will draft a press release about the Working Group and will share it with the Working Group Chair before it is issued. Members of the Working Group agreed to refer reporters to the forthcoming press release if approached by the media.
- 8) The Library of Congress will draft and the Chair will circulate full minutes of the November 3 inaugural meeting to the Working Group members prior to public release.

Recorders:

Susan Morris, The Library of Congress  
Rebecca Green, The University of Maryland