

Cataloging/Acquisitions Workflow

NAAUG 2004 Topical Discussion

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Most of the attendees had been in production in Aleph for 18 months or longer; a few attendees had yet to switch to production.

Do you catalog in OCLC or in Aleph?

- One former NOTIS library used to do original cataloging in NOTIS, then uploaded the records to OCLC. Now it does original cataloging in CatME, but copy cataloging in Aleph. They set their holdings when searching for the record for ordering.
- One consortium uses a single bibliographic/administrative record for its union catalog, using the OCLC number for matching. They found that different libraries in the consortium had different practices for setting their holdings; some did it when ordering, some only upon receipt. They now batchload holdings to OCLC. They also search for copy in the union catalog first, then in OCLC. Their Adaptive (Copy) Cataloging Unit passes on materials as needed to the Enhanced/Original Cataloging Unit, using the Item Process Status to track the materials.

Did you have an integrated acquisitions system before Aleph? How has Aleph changed the way cataloging and acquisitions units interact?

- One library had DRA for cataloging and Innovative Interfaces for acquisitions. Now they have problems with the catalogers not liking the records that were selected in acquisitions. It was noted that if holdings are not set in OCLC when ordering, the catalogers can always overlay the record that acquisitions selected.
- One change in Aleph that one library does not like is the need to go to the item record to input the barcode, when they used to be able to include it in the OCLC record and export it with the record.
- One library that did not have an integrated acquisitions system before has now combined the cataloging and acquisitions units.
- A few libraries do copy cataloging in their acquisitions departments:
 - There can be resistance from catalogers who think the resulting records are not good enough.
 - There can also be resistance from acquisitions staff who think that they have no time to search for the best record, and prefer to enter a brief record into Aleph for ordering.
 - Others reported that they found searching OCLC for a record was in fact faster than inputting brief records.
 - One library has moved cataloging and acquisitions to a joint technical services center where all staff are expected to perform all technical services functions.

- Some felt that giving copy cataloging to acquisitions staff gave them more interesting work to do.

Is there a problem with backlogs when implementing Aleph?

- Some people find Aleph workflows to be more time consuming because they involve more clicks.
- One library had a staff member train others in keyboard shortcuts in Aleph in order to reduce mouse clicking.
- One library found that the time saved by simpler receiving and check-in workflows in Aleph reduced their backlog.
- Some libraries had a backlog when they first switched to production, but got through it quickly.
- One library cataloged on CatME during the freeze so there was little backlog when it switched to production.
- Cataloging workflows are slowed down by the need to check authorities manually.
- Many reported missing the shortcuts and macros they had used in their old systems.
- The editing features in Aleph are more powerful than most libraries had in their old systems; so one library reported that they had their most productive year on record since switching to Aleph.

How is labeling handled?

- Some libraries have the person receiving materials label books upon arrival.
- Others print labels from CatME while cataloging.
- The Aleph labeler is very difficult to configure at first, but works reliably once it is configured.

How do you represent multiple copies and holdings in Aleph?

- Some libraries use separate holdings records for each copy because there is acquisitions information in the 008 field of the holdings record.
- Others do not use separate holdings records if the copies are in the same location.
- There are many different places to populate copy number information in the item record, such as the 852 from the holdings record or the serials check-in screen.