

“Cataloging, Authorities, and Non-Roman Scripts” Discussion

Tuesday, June 15, 2004

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Facilitator Marlene Vikor opened this “smorgasboard” of discussion topics with a few leading questions:

1. What decisions made before the switch to production in ALEPH are we reconsidering since STP?
2. What functional “surprises” have we experienced, whether positive or negative, and how have we dealt with them?
3. How do we find ourselves “stretching standards” to work within the limits of the system?
4. What cataloging and processing efficiencies, such as macros, templates, shortcuts, etc., have we devised or discovered?
5. What sources are we using for provisional records?
6. What permissions challenges have we encountered for item, holding, and bibliographic records?

Discussion participants responded with their own questions and answers. The first was how to blend creation of original authority records into cataloging workflow in ALEPH when migrating from a system which automatically machine-derived authority records for every new heading. Authority records are desirable both to provide cross-references to help users in searching and to help non-catalogers who will be cataloging choose headings consistently. Do ALEPH users typically derive original authority records from bibliographic records? Do ALEPH users create authority records on a record by record basis, or periodically, such as weekly?

Audience members answered that in some libraries authority records are created case by case and derived from bibliographic records when possible. In other libraries original authority records are created only to avoid conflicts in the OPAC. In one library, authority records acquired from three different vendors were migrated to ALEPH; the consortium plans to load the Library of Congress Authority File centrally to run live in the background. In this library few authority records are created locally; instead staff members file conflict resolution requests with OCLC. In libraries where a lot of original authority records are created, templates and macros may be helpful. The problem of ambiguous headings in ALEPH was explained for those who have not yet gone live. Participants desiring further details about the authorities enhancements now anticipated in v.18 should consult the NAAUG site for Sandy Card’s NAAUG 2003 presentation as well as the detailed requests prepared for last year’s enhancement vote.

Another question was about the difficulties of moving item and order records from one bibliographic record to another; this cannot be done in ALEPH version 14 but has been implemented in version 16. In version 15, the Navigation Map is the only means to move items from one bibliographic record to another, but does not work if there are too many items attached to the bibliographic record for them all to display. A related issue is that dragging and dropping the wrong records is easy to do by mistake. In one case, a staff member in a demonstration was able to move an ADM record to another bib record by mistake but lacked the necessary permissions to move it back. Some libraries have also disabled the Delete button on the Navigation Map in order to avoid deleting records by mistake.

The audience requested more detail about Vikor’s description of the USMAI system configuration with one ADM for the entire consortium. The single ADM was necessary to support title-level holds; there is a single bibliographic record with individual holdings, item, and order records. Ex Libris Manager of Training Claudia Balby added that the model of a single ADM and single bibliographic record with various sub-libraries is used internationally, whereas several US consortia chose the multi-ADM model for more flexibility in table setup. As version 16 allows greater flexibility, she predicts some US consortia may move to the single ADM model. A representative from one consortium which uses multiple ADM records noted that library staff cannot move their own library’s holdings to another library’s bibliographic record but must ask consortium staff to do so. Version 15.5.3 is supposed to offer title-level holds with multiple ADM records.

Facilitator Marlene Vikor asked whether any other libraries had implemented the “super holdings” concept. In the USMAI, with merged bibliographic records for several campuses and institutions, library staff create “super holdings” to accommodate local notes and added entries which do not belong in the master records. Local data in the “super holdings” records, such as an added entry for local faculty member responsible for a book chapter, displays with the bibliographic data presented in the local filter. “Super holdings” data is indexed the same as data in bibliographic records. Other local notes also exist in standard holdings and items records and are indexed for Web Pac or GUI access.

In response to a question from the facilitator about whether anyone has revisited initial indexing decisions, one librarian responded that she will be adding indexes for new locations as a result of having physically relocated some collections. Another cautioned that implementing too many indexes can slow down reindexing after version updates. Some library staff have found indexes thought desirable by staff actually did not serve the public well, such as indexing “continues” and “continued by” title added entries for serials. In one library, collection was the most helpful index overall because of its utility in gathering ARL statistics.

A discussion of using the ITM type LKR tag in the bibliographic record to link analytic records followed. One participant cautioned that ANA type LKR tags should be used with caution as “they link everything.” In general, creating links serves public services staff well but creates more work for technical services staff. One consortium is experimenting with the LKR because the analyzed parts of a title may not all be owned by one institution; “bound withs” may also present problems. Staff in one library are using the LKR for bound volumes for which the serial title has changed in the middle of a volume. Staff in another library hired student aides to do complete retrospective serial analytical linking, while staff in other libraries have done selective linking. Those who use the LKR should be aware that subfields must match exactly or the Web OPAC display will not work; the link breaks when analytics are bound because they no longer match exactly, although this does not cause system problems. Series added entries can also be used to sub-arrange numerically in cases where the LKR does not work well. What staff and users really want is linking of more than one bibliographic record to an item, although in this case only one item would have the real barcode and circulation history.

Various serial problems were discussed. One librarian noted serial issues which are arrived out of order do not sort correctly. The response was that many factors affect sort order; for example, if the year and volume are entered in incorrect order, the data display works but the sort order is wrong. Another library had serial titles that had to be converted from a proprietary system to MARC 21; many of these lacked patterns. The staff in this library gradually implemented international standards instead of doing things they way they had always done them.

In closing, a discussion participant encouraged those new to ALEPH to ask questions and to test everything thoroughly. He reminded us that we all have to re-learn the system when we upgrade to a new version.