**Partnerships for Providing Access to Library Resources:
Pushing the Envelope at the University of Oregon Libraries**

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By

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Thank you all for coming to this session scheduled for the last slot of the conference. As was noted in my introduction, I'm the Head of the Catalog Department at the University of Oregon Libraries., a position I've held for three years. Before that, I was at UCLA, Indiana University, the University of Florida, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a few other places before I got my master's. All of my time has been in academic libraries, except for some time spent working as a volunteer at a small public library in Nebraska. Most of my time has been focused on cataloging, although I also ran a branch library for a year, and have worked in Acquisitions, Collection Development, Circulation, Systems, and Reference in my career. I've been a librarian for 19 years and a paraprofessional library assistant for seven years before that, and even a student assistant for two years in my college library.

Even though I've been cataloging for many years, my job has been continually changing – cataloging has been continually changing. When I first learned to catalog as a library assistant at Cornell University, it was rules, rules, rules. Everything had to be done in a very precise way. We even checked and revised records from the Library of Congress because we didn't consider them good enough. And this was in the days when we were using OCLC as a means to produce catalog cards, rather than create online records.

That's all changed now. What we're doing now in cataloging would have been unthinkable 20 years ago – if we could even have imagined it.

I wanted to talk with you today about the changing nature of providing access to information, how the University of Oregon Libraries Catalog Department is evolving in response to these changes, and describe a few of our projects from the past couple of years to illustrate our evolution. Perhaps some of what we've experimented with will be useful to you.

The main point that I'd like to make before getting into any specifics about the environment at the University of Oregon Libraries is that catalogers no longer have a monopoly on organizing library materials and providing access to them (if we ever did).

When I talk with my colleagues from outside the Catalog Department, I frequently point out to them that what they've been doing is really cataloging: whether it's developing a finding aid for a collection of materials, or a building database to describe and provide some level of control over some collection, or creating a Webliography of library materials in a particular discipline – the

process of organizing, describing in some systematic fashion, and providing a means for the public to retrieve information about specific materials is cataloging in its broadest sense. It seems that everyone is involved in this kind of work these days, not just catalogers.

The second point I want to emphasize – because it's one that you already know - is that we (libraries) are being asked to provide access to more and more materials, including materials we don't own or even license. And people want help discovering and sorting out the growing mass of information.

The third point is that catalogers, even if they wanted to, cannot go it alone - if they have any hope of providing some bibliographic control to this growing mass of information that their library has selected. The old way is not the only way, and it's not necessarily the best way for everything.

Access to Collections

So, how has the University of Oregon been handling these changes?

In the summer of 2000, the University of Oregon Libraries began what has become an annual process of setting a number of initiatives or goals for themselves for the coming year. One of the initiatives in that first year was the Access to Collections Initiative http://libweb.uoregon.edu/~catdept/home/accesstaskgroup.html , which was charged to look at improvements to providing physical and bibliographic access to the Libraries' collections. The group had members from Cataloging, Access Services, Special Collections, and the branch libraries. The multi-departmental and multi-divisional membership of the group was significant because it meant that access was now considered a library-wide issue instead of just a cataloging problem.

Two significant undertakings of this group were to draft a white paper outlining bibliographic access options for the Libraries and secondly to conduct a survey of uncataloged collections.

The white paper (http://libweb.uoregon.edu/~catdept/new/bibaccess4.html)
laid out a variety of approaches to bibliographic access. It introduced the concept of metadata to the library and identified MARC as just one metadata standard available for control of materials. It also introduced SEVERAL key concepts, which were new to the UO's approach to bibliographic access:

1. different levels and types of access are acceptable and necessary for different kinds of materials;
2. not all access has been or will in the future be provided by catalogers, and
3. success rests on developing partnerships among the different groups.
4. An underlying principle that the paper laid out was that, although different mechanisms might be utilized for providing bibliographic access (finding aids, databases, the catalog) the long-term goal was one portal that would make using the different tools transparent to the users. And that still is a long-term goal.

Right now, the online catalog is the closest we have to a single portal and so many of our efforts have focused on getting records to describe or point to materials into the catalog.

The survey of uncataloged collections that this group did was conducted by means of a Web form http://libweb.uoregon.edu/~catdept/new/uncatsurvey.html which all subject specialists and collection curators were asked to fill out describing any collection in their area that was not cataloged, what kinds of materials were in it, what the physical condition of the materials was, whether there was any kind of finding aid or database that described the collection, and what kind of access was ultimately desired, addressing such issues as item-level versus collection-level, type of classification, subject analysis, etc.

When the survey was completed (and here's a page from the survey spreadsheet), we discovered that we had over 500,000 items owned by the Libraries for which item-level access was desired, most of which were in Special Collections and the Document Center. These were not materials, which had previously been considered a backlog – they were always before the Libraries' stepchildren, even though many of these materials were some of the most unique materials owned by the Libraries. In addition to traditional book collections, these consisted of maps, photographs, manuscripts, archives, and the like.

After the survey was completed, as Chair of the Access to Collections group, I pulled together another group http://libweb.uoregon.edu/~catdept/new/collecpriority.html called the Collection Priorities Subgroup and asked the Head of Collection Development, Faye Chadwell, to co-chair it with me. It also included one other cataloger (who was also a subject specialist), the Head of the Document Center, the director of the Division of Special Collections and University Archives, the Head of the Architecture and Allied Arts Library and one reference librarian/subject specialist from the main library – representatives of the primary uncataloged collections. The group was charged to come up with a system for ranking the uncataloged collections and recommending an appropriate mechanism for providing bibliographic access.

This was a critical step in emphasizing – again - that access was a librarywide issue and not a Catalog Department problem. the group devised a set of weighted criteria for ranking the collections (details about the criteria can be found on the Web site) and then proceeded to rank the collections.

Two groupings of collections were separately ranked – the collections for which item-level access was desired and those for which collection-level access was desired. This ranking process has now been adopted to evaluate new gift collections and the intent is to keep this survey up-to-date, showing progress on existing collections and tracking and ranking new collections.

A key step necessary for our being able to deal with the uncataloged collections was to explore collection-level cataloging. Even before the work of the Access to Collections group got underway, the Catalog Department had explored collection-level cataloging as an approach to providing access to some collections. We studied a document put out by the Library of Congress

a number of years ago describing the rationale for this type of access rather than item-level access. We next decided on the standards and data elements we would always provide in such records, and produced a brief white paper for the entire Library outlining the option and inviting collection curators to submit collections to us for this type of cataloging. We formulated a series of questions that we would need answered in order to catalog collections in this manner and we developed and posted on the Web a survey form for collection curators

As is often the case with us, the Head of the Document Center, Tom Stave, was the first to volunteer. Working with him on the collection of terminal projects produced as part of the Planning, Public Policy, and Management Program (PPPM), we created our first collection-level record. This was an especially interesting collection for us because they already had a Web-accessible database describing individual papers. The catalog record described the collection as a whole and also provided a hotlink to the database.

Creating a collection-level record is a highly collaborative process between a cataloger and a collection curator. We have found that the greatest stumbling block to getting these records done is for the collection curators to find the time to work with us, to answer the questions about the collections so that we can create the records.

Backlog ranking

Another strategy that we have used was to provide an easy means for subject specialists to rank items in the monographic backlog (our serials backlog is almost non-existent – one of the "positive" side effects of repeated rounds of serials cuts).

As part of the survey of uncataloged collections, I had run a search against the database to discover the size of the backlogs under the control of the Catalog Department so that we could include them in the survey. When the Collections Priority subgroup began to rank collections for cataloging, we realized that the backlog required special handling because it wasn't under the control of one curator and all the materials were thrown together by date of receipt rather than by subject. A special project years earlier to have subject specialists come in to review the backlog hadn't been very successful because it took a lot of time for them to come through, look at the materials item-by-item in order to find their own subject materials, and then make decisions about retention or withdrawal. And, since they were only deciding whether to retain or withdraw, there wasn't much incentive for them to spend the time.

So, we decided to make the process both simpler and to give them an incentive. I ran lists sorted by fund number of the items in the monographic backlog and allowed subject specialists to designate as many items as they wanted as priority cataloging. We announced that the priority items would be pulled from the backlog and cataloged on a priority basis, in the order in which we received the lists back from subject specialists. Those specialists who turned their ranked list in first would have their materials cataloged sooner. This process was very successful and hundreds of items from all subject areas were given priority cataloging. And not a few pretty esoteric materials were withdrawn from the collections, as well. Everyone was happy with that effort.

Outreach to the campus

One of our more interesting and, for me, personally satisfying experiments was in Providing Access to non-library collections
http://libweb.uoregon.edu/~catdept/new/outreach.html

Shortly after I arrived in Oregon, I began to be approached by members of the campus community wanting help in providing access to small collections of materials that they had available for their staff and students. Some of them expressed an interest in having these materials cataloged – but they didn't want to give them to the Libraries.

When I first broached this topic with Library Admin, I was told simply that we didn't do this. So, I waited and, before long. one of the subject specialists also raised the idea and I was able to collaborate with some of my colleagues from other library departments (including Access Services, Collection Development, and Reference). We worked up a model for providing access to collections not owned by the library.

Our model addressed the technical and policy issues. We identified a test case – the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Educational Support Service – and proposed to Library Council (all department heads and several coordinators) that we try the model out. In the fall of 2001, we entered records for the LGBT collection into the local catalog. This is an example of one such record.

Since then, we have entered records for the Environmental Resources Center and are almost finished with the Ecological Design Center's collection. As part of this process, we also catalog the Center's Web site and have a link from the location code in each bibliographic record to a page that gives a brief outline of the collection and points again to the Center's Web site.

Since we are not taking any responsibility for the availability of the materials in these collections, records for them are not contributed to Orbis (we don't handle circulation, they're not available for interlibrary loan, etc.) We also rely on the Centers to notify us when there are items to be added or deleted. For two of the three collections we have done so far, we have made use of volunteers to bring the records in and have had the work checked by regular staff. Full details of our policy and procedures for handling these materials can be found on the Web and you have that URL in your handouts.

Map cataloging

We also continue new approaches to providing access to collections that the Libraries do own.

One of the largest collections of uncataloged materials (over 200,000 items) is the University of Oregon's map collection. In 2002, the Map Librarian, Andrew Nicholson, and I attended the Map Cataloging preconference at ALA Annual. I understand cataloging, he understands maps – together we almost make up one adequate map cataloger.

Following the preconference, he and I began to work up local standards for copy cataloging of maps. (We haven't been brave enough to do originals yet.) We reviewed the possible data elements in a MARC record for maps and determined which ones needed to be present for us to consider the record minimally acceptable. Since we have such a large map collection, with many maps having short titles that are the same as many books, we determined that it wanted to include

the GMD [cartographic materials] in the title field. Since that data element is not permitted in OCLC records (which follows the practice of the Library of Congress), we have developed a macro, which inserts the GMD in the proper position into every record we use right before downloading.

The process we have developed follows the model of fast or accept cataloging that the UO has had in place for years and makes use of staff from the Catalog Dept. and the Collection Development and Acquisitions Dept. The Map Librarian and I trained the staff together and we share problem-solving responsibilities for the records and, since we began in November, we have cataloged over 5000 maps. This project is being done on an "as time permits" basis – as a fill-in for staff when their regular work runs a little slow or when they need a break from their regular work. They've really taken to it. This has been a successful partnership involving staff from 3 departments and 2 divisions.

Electronic resources

Another area where we've developed a new type of partnership is with Licensed electronic resources. Like most libraries, the UO has invested heavily in electronic resources. For a while, we maintained duplicate methods for providing access to them - cataloging them as well as creating separate lists of electronic journals and databases. The catalog records were created by Catalog Department staff and the lists of resources were maintained by the Head of Systems, Sara Brownmiller.

The majority of the resources so far have been serials. Even though our Serials Cataloging Team is very current in cataloging licensed electronic resources, there is always some lag time between when we secure the license and make the resources available and the time that the catalog records are created or updated (we use the single-record approach for electronic serials, meaning that we add URLs for electronic access to bibliographic records for the print version when we have both).

In 2002, the Head of Systems approached me wondering if we might not combine our efforts and also make the information about the accessibility available more quickly. The Head of the Serials Cataloging Team, Mary Grenci, developed a template for creating brief bibs when there was no print record in the catalog and trained the Head of Systems to create bib records and/or add URLs to existing bibs. These records are specially coded so that we can pull a file of them once a month and get them into the queue for full cataloging. In this way, the Head of Systems is actually doing less work, is notifying us of the need to catalog new resources, and is providing immediate access to the resources through the catalog, as soon as she's set up the access. It takes her less time, provides faster access for the public, and simultaneously gets the cataloging process started. We're all really pleased with how successful and easy this was. All we had to do was trust her and train her.

Projects with Special Collections

This strategy of involving library staff from outside the Catalog Department in cataloging projects was also employed in work that was undertaken in partnership with Special Collections staff. With the support of the Director of Special Collections and University Archives, James Fox, I began in the fall of 2000 to work with several of his staff to teach them how to catalog manuscript and archival collections. I developed a manual for them, which outlined the relevant MARC

fields, introduced them to the SAA's guidelines for Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts (APPM), and to concepts like controlled vocabulary and authority control. We also reviewed records that other libraries had created for their manuscript collections. We met on a weekly basis for many months and gradually came up with local decisions on some standard approaches we would take when cataloging these materials. We began to create records in OCLC, with them doing the initial record and then the group of us reviewing them and discussing their approach to a particular collection. I was initially the final reviewer of the records and would enter the records in OCLC and bring them into the local catalog.

The main challenge in this process was for the Special Collections staff, who are very inadequately staffed for the level of service they provide, to find the time to create the MARC records. After this process had been in place for about a year and we hadn't succeeded in creating more than a handful of records, I decided to bring in other catalogers from the Catalog Department and train them how to catalog these materials.

As the first step, I, my two catalogers, and the Special Collections staff were all given the same two finding aids from two separate collections. Each individual created a MARC record for the two collections and the group of us got together to review them. By looking at six different versions of the same record, we were able to make policy decisions about what we would and would not do.

What we found is that the Special Collections staff struggled with the MARC tagging, OCLC inputting, and determining the correct form of a name or subject headings. The catalogers struggled with identifying the key elements from the finding aid to incorporate into the MARC record. We now have in place a process whereby either Special Collections or Catalog Department staff can begin a MARC record for one of their collections.

Catalogers are given a finding aid where the information considered especially significant has been highlighted by Special Collections staff. They then create the MARC record, put it into the OCLC save file, and Special Collections staff review it for content. When it has been approved for content, the cataloger enters the record in OCLC and brings it into the local database.

If Special Collections staff start the MARC record, they also put it into the OCLC save file, where it is reviewed by catalogers for proper MARC content designation and for correct formulation of name and subject headings. When all recommended changes have been discussed, catalogers enter the record into OCLC and bring it into the local database. This process is working extremely well because it makes use of the special expertise of both groups. Special Collections staff bring their knowledge of the collections and their significance to bear and catalogers bring their knowledge of MARC and AACR2 to bear on creating the records.

EAD

As part of this partnership with Special Collections, he Catalog Department is also branching out beyond MARC cataloging. Three of us in the department have been trained in Encoded Archival Description and are working with Special Collections on a grant to develop the Northwest Digital Archives, creating EAD finding aids for a portion of our manuscript, archives, and photographic

collections. Special Collections staff are playing the lead role in this effort. This is an example of our first attempt at an XML/EAD finding aid.

Another collaborative project involves the University Archivist, Heather Briston.
University Archives has large collections of vital, unique records of university activities that are largely uncontrolled. They're in boxes and there are some basic inventories but a lot remains to be done. In preparation for a coming move of large segments of their collections, it became necessary to develop an inventory system.
Rather than use a separate database, the University Archivist, the Head of Access Services, Shirien Chappell, and I decided to use MARC records created in the local catalog with detailed item records to provide this inventory control. The records are suppressed from public display. We developed a call number scheme (which allows for locating individual boxes of materials to specific shelves), with detailed inventory control being provided through item records.

We decided to use the local catalog for this work because the long-term goal is to catalog these collections fully. Whenever we do catalog a collection, we will overlay the brief bib record with the full MARC record and unsuppress the record.
We designed the item records so that the information in them would not need to be changed when the collections were cataloged. To facilitate this process, I developed bibliographic and item record templates and trained the Archivist to input them directly into the local catalog. I also reviewed a list of all the unique department names for the collections and provided authority control up front for them so that the headings on the records will not create conflicts in the catalog.

METADATA IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

One of the most interesting and challenging projects we've undertaken in providing access to library resources relates to digital library initiatives.

In November of 2002 Metadata Implementation Group got started
http://libweb.uoregon.edu/catdept/meta/metahome.html

We were created as an offshoot of another library project, the Digital Library Initiative. The METADATA group, which I chair, includes four members of the Catalog Dept. (me, Lori Robare, and my two newest librarians Corey Harper and Nathan Georgitis), the Preservation and Digital Library Coordinator, the East Asian Bibliographer, the Curator of the Visual Resources Collection of the AAA Library, the Map Librarian, and one of the Science Librarians. All members of the group have unique expertise and experience with digital collections. Our charge was:

- to review metadata standards for digital collections in general, including the use of controlled vocabularies;

- to develop data dictionaries for specific collections;

- and to implement one or more collections using OCLC's CONTENTdm software.

We've done a lot of work since we started meeting in November. We've worked up our data dictionary for a major photographic collection that we're mounting as an NWACC funded grant project with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla.

Catalog Department staff are also playing the lead role in digitizing the glass-plate negatives that are the basis of the collection, building the CONTENTdm database, creating controlled vocabularies, and populating the database with descriptions of the scanned images. This work has been accomplished largely since February 24.

You can look at our ongoing work to build this collection by following the Boundless link on the Metadata Implementation Group's home page. This kind of collaborative effort to create and provide access to digital collections in a systematic way is a large part of what I consider our future to be. This is just one of the images that we've digitized and described.

Secrets of success

In conclusion, have all these efforts been successful? Well, obviously I think so, or I wouldn't be talking with you about them. I consider them successful because we have provided access to more types of materials than ever before, without any increase in staff. We have developed new partnerships across the Libraries and campus. We have gained new skills and have positioned ourselves to play a vital and expanded role. When people think of access and innovation at the University of Oregon Libraries, they think of the Catalog Dept. They know that we will try to work with them to accomplish their goals for providing access to library resources.

I just want to leave you with what I consider the secrets of our success.

Solid infrastructure to build on: our catalog is in great shape, we have an up-to-date, proactive authority control and database maintenance program in place. One reason we're comfortable bringing so many records in, say for the map cataloging project, with so little review, is because we do routine authority work on every new name, series, or subject heading from these records – after the records enter the catalog. Our Catalog Management and Enrichment Team has four full-time staff members, as well as a librarian as Team Leader, who have primary responsibility for the integrity of the local catalog. If we didn't have such a well-trained staff and such well-developed procedures, we might be far more cautious about the methods we use for bringing records into the database. This fact, combined with the fact that we always evaluate the minimum data elements needed in bibliographic records for a certain project and train staff to look for those minimum data elements before accepting a record, has made the variety of records fit together. We always ask ourselves "How much is good enough? What's the minimum that we have to have?

Great staff

I always tell people that the staff of the Catalog Dept at the UO is the best group of people I've worked with in my 20+ years as a librarian. Every one of them is knowledgeable, professional in their approach, eager to learn, and willing to experiment. If I were not so fortunate to have such staff, many – if not most – of these efforts could not have happened. In particular, Lori Robare, my assistant department head, is key to much of our success.

Flexibility

Everyone has to be willing to experiment and try new approaches. To be willing to experiment means that sometimes you might make a mistake. We've learned to be willing to take that risk and accept the consequences. We have had remarkably few missteps in the past three years.

Comfortable with ambiguity and less than perfect

The projects we've undertaken have one thing in common – the fact that they're all different from each other. We accept the fact that different collections require different standards to meet the needs of the users. We don't try to force everything into the same mold. We know that we would not have made progress if we had insisted that every record entering the catalog met the highest standards. We define what is minimally acceptable, focusing on access, and build from there.

Working directly with our user communities

We accept the expertise that our public services colleagues have in working directly with the public. They are also one of our primary user groups. We consult with them and with public users directly, as when we catalog non-library collections, learning what their needs are and developing a process that meets those needs. Whenever possible, we make our users part of the solution.

Great colleagues

I've worked in a lot of libraries. The University of Oregon Libraries are special. At the University of Oregon, we're fortunate to have talented, dedicated people throughout the system. They are flexible and willing to work with us. Without that, we would not be able to do nearly as much.

Trust

No single person – or department – can do it alone. We've had to be willing to trust people to do things that they have never done before and provide the proper training for them to succeed. We've had to overcome our own discomfort in having people from outside cataloging work on catalog records.

Administrative support

One of the keys to success at the UO is that Library Admin generally stays out of the way. They let us all play together without making us ask for permission to do so. They trust us to work for the good of the institution and to keep them informed of what we're up to. That's the best support they can offer us and we're grateful for it.

That concludes my remarks.