Book Reviews

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The Changing Nature of the Catalog and Its Integration with Other Discovery Tools: Final Report. Prepared for the Library of Congress by Karen Calhoun. Mar. 17, 2006. 52 p. Available at www.loc.gov/catdir/calhoun-report-final.pdf.

Rethinking How We Provide Bibliographic Services for the University of California: Final Report. The University of California Libraries, Bibliographic Services Task Force. Dec. 2005. 79 p. Available at http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/sopag/BSTF/Final.pdf.

In recent months, two documents, *The Changing Nature of the Catalog and Its Integration with Other Discovery Tools: Final Report* (Calhoun report) and *Rethinking How We Provide Bibliographic Services for the University of California: Final Report* (UC report), have received much attention within the library community, particularly among catalogers and library administrators. Not surprisingly, these stakeholders have had very different reactions to the reports. To some library administrators, the reports have been seen as innovative attempts to find much-needed solutions for the high costs of technical services processing and to better position research libraries for the digital information environment by re-envisioning the online catalog to meet the information-seeking needs and behaviors of an increasingly Google-aphilic public. Catalogers have responded somewhat differently.

Both reports have been widely criticized in the cataloging community (as represented by attendees of the 2006 American Library Association Annual Conference and by subscribers to AUTOCAT and other cataloging-related electronic lists). While many discussions have focused on specific recommendations in one or both of the documents, others have focused on misrepresentations of research, faulty assumptions, or the "nefarious" intentions of the authors. One posting even compared the disagreements over cataloging's future to a culture war among "two camps with widely divergent views. . . . with each side trying to (re)claim the purpose and nature of cataloging and catalogs for both present and future."[1]

The analogy is not without merit. Many catalogers see these documents as conclusive proof that evil *does* exist in the world, or at least see the documents as myopic attempts to: (1) dismantle cataloging practices that have effectively served our patrons for centuries, (2) radically change the mission and priorities of research libraries, and (3) justify gambling on promised technological innovations yet to be fully developed or implemented. While I tend to agree with this view, it is important not to dismiss these documents without serious consideration of their content. It must be acknowledged that many of the reports' conclusions are not altogether unreasonable. These documents, while inflammatory, do contain some well-reasoned arguments for examining cataloging processes and workflows. Even the most die-hard cataloger will admit that cataloging and catalogs are not without problems; for decades, catalogers themselves have been saying that online catalogs are difficult to use. Many of the recommendations, such as the oft-stated inclusion of spell-check, reviews, book jackets, tables of contents, and greater access to full text, are reasonable and desirable. Several flawed or suspect assumptions, and some radical suggestions for changes without substantiation, however, damage the documents' overall credibility within the cataloging community. Some of the more dubious recommendations include:

- abandoning the attempt to do comprehensive subject analysis manually with Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) in favor of subject keywords (Calhoun report, 18);
- urging the Library of Congress (LC) to dismantle LCSH (Calhoun report, 18);
- defining fast turnaround and delivery as the standard of quality service, not the fullness of cataloging data (Calhoun report, 18);
- replacing the traditional LCSH structure with a more structured syntax, such as Faceted Application of Subject Terminology (FAST) (UC report, 23); and
- using controlled vocabularies only for name, uniform title, date, and place, and abandoning the use of controlled vocabularies for topical subjects (UC report, 24).

Problems abound with these and other recommendations. For example, the unfinished FAST was not designed as a replacement for LCSH, and research has shown that results of keyword searching are reduced by one-third when LCSH is removed (and tables of contents are *not* adequate substitutes for LCSH).[2] As catalysts for discussion, both reports had potential to begin constructive discourse on the future of cataloging, but LC's abrupt change in series authority control and the aggressive campaign by Deanna Marcum, associate librarian for library services at LC, to transform cataloging have damaged the prospects for discus-

sions to be conducted amicably in the near future. It appears to many that cataloging is under attack by those who should be defending it.

It is also important not to lump both documents together into a single category. There are significant differences between the two in their goals and their influence. The UC report is less problematic. It is an investigative report written to stimulate discussion of the future of the catalog and cataloging services in the University of California library system; it explores how *one* library system can rethink its own workflow. The recommendations made by the task force have not been implemented wholesale, nor will they be. In an April 2006 AUTOCAT posting, Sarah Shatford Layne put the nature of the report into perspective:

> I would urge everyone to take the recommendations in the "California Report" as a point of departure for discussions, not as a blueprint for action. The recommendations in the report were intended for *discussion* within the UCs, not necessarily for implementation. . . . The presence of a recommendation in the report does not necessarily mean that the recommendation will be implemented by the UC system.[3]

There are no suggestions that other libraries should follow their lead. The same, however, cannot be said of the Calhoun report, which states that it was written, "from the perspective of major research libraries in general, rather than focusing on the issues as they relate to LC specifically"(8).

When considering these reports, it is difficult not to mention other recent documents on the same topics, specifically Marcum's "The Future of Cataloging"[4] and Thomas Mann's critical review of the Calhoun report.[4] Marcum's paper and Calhoun's report contain many of the same suggestions; their points and concerns for the future are unsurprisingly similar. Mann's papers, however, voice a dissenting opinion. He views many of Calhoun and Marcum's underlying assumptions as faulty, particularly Calhoun's use of a business model as a framework for evaluating the future of the catalog. Mann points out that research libraries exist not to secure a greater market share or to generate profits, but to promote *scholarship*—something endangered by the suggestions and actions of Marcum, Calhoun, and others pursuing a promised (but still uncertain) digital utopia based on Google-like searching, minimal cataloging, digitizing books (no matter the copyright implications), and eliminating human-based subject analysis (no matter the chaos and loss of information that would ensue). Mann states:

> According to the Calhoun report, library operations that are not digital, that do not result in resources that are remotely accessible, that involve professional human judgment or expertise, or that

require conceptual categorization and standardization rather than relevance ranking of keywords, do not fit into its proposed "leadership" strategy. . . . Its recommendations to eliminate Library of Congress Subject Headings, and to use "fast turnaround" time as the "gold standard" in cataloging, are particularly unjustified, and would have serious negative consequences for the capacity of research libraries to promote scholarly research.[5]

Calhoun justifies her recommendations early in her report: "Today, a large and growing number of students and scholars routinely bypass library catalogs in favor of other discovery tools, and the catalog represents a shrinking proportion of the universe of scholarly information. The catalog is in decline, its processes and structures are unsustainable, and change needs to be swift" (5). Throughout her report, she repeats that students and scholars do not use the library catalog *first* (implying disingenuously that they do not use the library catalog *at all*), preferring Internet search engines instead. Marcum, too, uses this argument, focusing on undergraduates as typical library patrons. "We recognize that the way people seek information has changed dramatically. Younger people go to Google, and don't go first to our catalogs. We've done a great job of identifying high-quality materials, of describing them, but we see that users appear to put a higher premium on convenience and speed." Both cite results of information-seeking-behavior studies on which to model library services. Neither, however, discriminates between the related (but distinct) processes of simple information seeking and in-depth scholarly research. It is alarming that they place so much emphasis on the needs of casual information seekers and so little attention to the needs of scholars.

Calhoun's suggestion that automated processes should replace intellectual categorization and description could have devastating effects on the scholar. Heeding the call to simplify cataloging and to eliminate subject analysis would be tailoring catalogs to the lowest common denominator. By using a simple information-seeking model to redesign online catalogs, these visionaries may just succeed in destroying the scholar's ability to conduct genuine research, with serious, long-term consequences for education and the intellectual life of this country. Dumbing-down effective systems of description and subject access to meet the needs of casual information seekers does a disservice to those who genuinely need access to information resources that have been organized into conceptual categories, which reveal bibliographic and subject relationships. Finding *something*—a cornerstone of Internet information seeking—is not satisfactory in actual scholarly endeavors; one does not use Google to conduct a literature review. Marcum and Calhoun should know that.

In "An Essay on Criticism," Alexander Pope wrote:

A little Learning is a dang'rous Thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian Spring:
There shallow Draughts intoxicate the Brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.[6]

This quotation is especially germane to the Calhoun and UC reports. Both reports are useful for stimulating discussions of the future direction of cataloging, but it is hoped that readers who view these documents as blueprints for action will remember Pope's words. One also hopes they will be seen through the lens of debate rather than as set rationales for doing irreparable harm to scholarship, the scholar's ability to access our accumulated store of knowledge effectively and efficiently, and the profession of librarianship itself. Pope's quotation is a caveat to those who prefer cost reductions over their responsibility to future generations of scholars and researchers. While both documents have their place in library science literature, a superficial, indiscriminate, or inexpert review of these documents by those just looking for justification to alter the basic functions of libraries in order to cut costs is indeed "a dang'rous Thing."—*Daniel N. Joudrey (Joudrey@simmons.edu), Simmons College, Boston*

References

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2. Tina Gross and Arlene G. Taylor, "What Have We Got to Lose? The Effects of Controlled Vocabulary on Keyword Searching Results," *College & Research Libraries* 66, no. 3 (2005): 212–30.
3. Sarah Shatford Layne, e-mail to AUTOCAT, Apr. 12, 2006, http://listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0604B&L=AUTOCAT&P=R3372&I=-3&X=7FD06343C55B790EC8.
4. Deanna B. Marcum, "The Future of Cataloging," *Library Resources & Technical Services* 50, no. 1 (2006): 5–9; also available at www.guild2910.org/marcum.htm; Thomas Mann, "'The Changing Nature of the Catalog and Its Integration with Other Discovery Tools. Final Report.' Mar. 17, 2006. Prepared for the Library of Congress by Karen Calhoun. A Critical Review," Library of Congress Professional Guild AFSCME Local 2910, www.guild2910.org/future.htm (accessed July 5, 2006).
5. Mann, "The Changing Nature of the Catalog."
6. Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Criticism," E-Server Poetry Collection, http://poetry.eserver.org/essay-on-criticism.html (accessed July 5, 2006).

IFLA Cataloguing Principles: Steps towards an International Cataloguing Code, 2: Report from the 2nd IFLA Meeting of Experts on an International Cataloguing Code, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2004. IFLA Series on Bibliographic Control, vol. 28. Eds. Barbara B. Tillett and Ana Lupe Cristán. München: K. G. Saur, 2005. 227 p. €78 cloth (ISBN 3-598-24277-8).

This volume consists chiefly of translations into Spanish of some of the presentation papers and background papers that were published in the predecessor volume *IFLA Cataloguing Principles: Steps towards an International Cataloguing Code: Report from the 1st IFLA Meeting of Experts on an International Cataloguing Code, Frankfurt, 2003*, which was reviewed in the July 2005 issue of *LRTS*. Some of the papers seem to have been rearranged or expanded for this volume, but this reviewer's Spanish is not good enough to judge the quality of the translations. Some material is presented in both English and Spanish, such as the introductory material, including the draft of the Statement of International Cataloguing Principles as updated through January 2005 and the recommendations from the meeting's working groups. The recommendations are mostly in the form of notes on discussions held by the various working groups. There were working groups on personal names, corporate names, seriality, multipart structures, and uniform titles and general material designations (GMDs). The groups studied the principles drafted at the Frankfurt meeting and made some recommendations on how they might be amended.

Some of the modifications proposed in the January 2005 draft of the statement were confusing. Section 5.4.1 ("The corporate name should be given in direct order, as commonly found on manifestations" [29]) is an important addition, but it still says nothing about how to handle subordinate bodies, as the Paris Principles did in section 9.6. In section 5.5.1, on uniform titles, the following statement was added: "Always add language and title" (30). Unfortunately, there is little justification or elucidation for this and other changes in the recommendations of the working groups, except to say that it is "convenient" (203). However, the April 2006 draft available online does include a statement about subordinate bodies and omits the addition to uniform titles.[1]

The statement of principles makes no mention of main entry or similar concepts, but the section on corporate body access points contains language taken from the 1961 Paris Principles for making main entry under a corporate body. This paragraph seems unnecessary if no access point is being chosen as the primary one. The next paragraph goes on to allow additional access points.

The value of this book lies in the documentation of the process of developing a statement of principles to replace the 1961 Paris Principles and making recommendations for a possible future international cataloging code. A third meeting was held for Middle East experts in December 2005, and regional meetings are planned in conjunction