

# Notes on Operations

## Creating an Un-Library Catalog

### A Case Study in Managing Satellite Collections

Gwen Evans and Kellie Tilton

*Over time, the University Libraries at Bowling Green State University incorporated several departmental or satellite collections into the catalog, only to expunge them later at the request of either the department or the library administration. To avoid past problems, the library took a new approach to a request to catalog a collection of VHS cassettes and DVDs for the Dr. Ralph H. Wolfe Viewing Center. This paper describes how the authors used a lightweight content management system to create a video catalog database that the Viewing Center's staff could easily update and manage. The solution presented here might be useful for other libraries facing similar requests.*

Academic department and research center libraries and reading rooms often present challenges to the central library on a campus. A common request from an academic department or research center is to include bibliographic records for these independent collections in the central library's catalog. As demands for web visibility grow, departments and research centers might see adding their collection holdings to the centralized library catalog as an obvious way to ensure that students and researchers know these centers hold unique and useful materials. This paper describes a project in the University Libraries at Bowling Green State University that provided a solution that met the needs of one such satellite collection while limiting the effect on the Libraries. Other libraries facing similar requests may find this solution applicable.

The University Libraries (UL) at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) has incorporated several departmental or satellite collections into the UL integrated library system (ILS) over time. Subsequently, the department or library administration decided to expunge holdings for several of these collections. This often has occurred because the department is unable to operate a separate collection capable of responding to the expanded access requests and holdings upkeep resulting from a more visible presence via the library catalog. Eager to avoid the cost in library staff time and processing for such ephemeral collections, the UL took a different approach to the latest request to catalog a collection of videos and DVDs for a newly created film center located on campus. The authors were asked to examine options that would meet the need for cataloging and give patrons access to the information. The goals of the project were to

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- increase the campus visibility of a satellite collection;
- use as few expensive, library-specific resources as possible;
- ensure that nonlibrary staff could permanently assume the upkeep of the resulting catalog; and
- develop a solution that could be offered as a standard alternative for such requests.

The solution implemented in this case study can be used or modified for libraries that struggle with finding an appropriate level of service to offer departments and centers with a minimal ongoing relationship with the library.

### Literature Review

Several authors have addressed the challenges that satellite collections, often interchangeably called reading rooms or departmental collections, present. According to Kasses, Taylor, and Jones, they evolve “from the book collections of professors, gifts, grant funds, departmental service fees, and a number of other sources.”<sup>1</sup> These authors noted that departmental libraries are distinguished from the central library because the supporting department will buy and maintain the items for the sole use of a group smaller than the institution at large.

Moynahan described the two sides of the issue, observing that satellite collections, while inefficient, continue to exist and should be embraced.<sup>2</sup> Bishop and Watts each described the inherent problems of departmental libraries and why they should not be used.<sup>3</sup> Bishop argued in 1901 that departmental libraries cannot handle the issues and intricacies of proper library management because of the collections being spread across a University campus. Watts stated that “the notion of physically removing the component parts to distant points on campus

is a mockery of the oft-proclaimed notion of the unity of knowledge, or of enhancing ready accessibility of users to reach and employ that knowledge.”<sup>4</sup> Taking the other side of the issue, Stefanacci, Wood, and Huff argued that better communication and cooperation between departmental libraries and the central library benefit both the central library and the patron.<sup>5</sup> Kasses, Taylor, and Jones reflected this perspective in their survey of medical departmental libraries in Columbia University’s system, explaining that meetings between the central library and the departmental library improved relations and the maintenance of these smaller collections.<sup>6</sup>

While the articles mentioned above explain at great length the problems and solutions of managing these sometimes unwieldy collections, the authors located only a few alternative solutions to adding items to the central library catalog. Bell found that one solution is for departments to use different databases than the central library to “customize records as it chooses (perhaps building on a list or database already in place), and is not bound by Library of Congress or other conventions.”<sup>7</sup> Moynahan offered suggestions ranging from outsourcing the cataloging using shelf lists to hiring a new cataloger specifically for the collection.<sup>8</sup> She determined, however, that most of these solutions were not economically feasible for departments to begin or maintain.

Despite the strain that cataloging and accommodating these satellite collections can put on libraries, as Souzzi and Kerbal explained,

the real question for departmental libraries is not whether they should exist. . . . Nor is the question whether they provide services that fulfill articulated needs. . . . Rather, the issue is how to design an organizational structure that will allow these nontraditional

entities to fit, enhancing and supporting their creative, client-centered character.”<sup>9</sup>

Moynahan cited this idea, then moved the notion a step further by suggesting the central library should not worry about how the smaller collections are managed, but instead focus on how to make others in the institution aware of their existence.<sup>10</sup>

### Case Study

As noted earlier, the UL catalog had previously contained records for a number of satellite collections not owned by the library. The units’ motivations for adding their collections in the library catalog varied, but most departments believed putting their materials in the main library catalog would give their collections, services, and institutional entities more visibility to students and researchers. Findability was the main concern, and the ILS was seen to meet that need. These satellite collections created confusion and frustration for users of the UL online catalog. Hours, services, and access restrictions were different from the other UL collections; users were confused by the status designation “not library owned” in the online catalog; and library staff were unable to answer user questions with detailed information about how to obtain the materials. The situation was complicated by the ULs remote storage facility and the relationship with the OhioLINK (Ohio Library and Information Network) statewide lending consortium—a group of more than eighty Ohio college and university libraries and the State Library of Ohio that share a union catalog—because users were accustomed to easy online requesting of remote and nonlibrary-owned materials. Most satellite collections provided no scanning or photocopying services and did not lend their materials through interlibrary loan or through OhioLINK. With

no ongoing relationship with the library staff once the items were cataloged, no one maintained the records. Thus status in the catalog was often inaccurate, adding frustration for users who were never sure if an item would be at the satellite collection. Because of these problems and the fact that many departments and centers discontinued their collections, records for these materials later had to be withdrawn by library staff from the ILS.

All the cataloging for the on-campus satellite collections was done by the UL at no cost to the departments or units. Records were added to the UL catalog, OCLC WorldCat, and the OhioLINK central catalog. When holdings for a satellite collection had to be removed, library staff had to delete the records from all these databases.

Given past experience, the library administration was reluctant to add additional satellite collections unsupported by professional library practice into the catalog. However, in 2007, an executive vice president of the university promised a prominent faculty member that the UL would catalog and host the records for the Film and Theater Studies Department's collection of VHS cassettes and DVDs. The promise created a delicate political situation, complicated by the significance of the collection. The new collection, donated by Ralph H. Wolfe, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English and Gish Professor of Film Studies, included approximately one thousand VHS cassettes and DVDs. Making the collection findable via a catalog and visible via the web would offer a valuable service to students and scholars.

The academic department and associated faculty wanted to retain ownership of the materials and create a standalone Ralph H. Wolfe Viewing Center. They also wanted an easily searchable catalog that would be accessible to students, outside researchers, and scholars, and draw traffic to the Wolfe Viewing Center. Uncertainty

about continued funding of the Wolfe Viewing Center, as well as past experience, made the UL administration reluctant to commit to full cataloging in the ILS. In addition, the Wolfe Viewing Center was to be staffed by students, so any alternative solution had to be simple enough that students and their nonlibrarian supervisor could manage it.

The coordinator of Library Information Technology Services (Library IT), one of the authors, was assigned the project of exploring possible alternative platforms or solutions and recommending the most promising. The second author, a library intern working in Collections and Technical Services, was assigned the project of implementing the catalog with the chosen platform. The coordinator of the nascent Wolfe Viewing Center served as the contact for the film and theater studies department, negotiating with the UL's chair of Collections and Technical Services to address what the Wolfe Viewing Center's support staff wanted and what the UL could provide.

### Finding the Appropriate Platform

The coordinator of Library IT began assessing software platforms that would allow the UL to donate initial organizational expertise but keep the collection out of the ILS and avoid committing the time of a professional librarian over the long term. Initial criteria for an acceptable solution were:

- Accessible on the Web without requiring the Wolfe Viewing Center to buy and run its own server,
- Easily learned and maintained by the Wolfe Viewing Center permanent and student staff,
- No continuing technical services or technological support supplied by the library once the

solution was in place, and

- Reasonable search and browse capability.

A secondary consideration was that the chosen software eventually would allow for a simple circulation or dynamic inventory control method. An additional consideration that emerged after discussion was the coordinator of the Wolfe Viewing Center's desire to brand or identify the collection with the Wolfe Viewing Center's name and visual identity. While the online catalog would have partially satisfied that desire by having a specific location and search capability that would limit searches to that location, any other solution was only marginally acceptable to the Wolfe Viewing Center coordinator if it could not serve the function of a combined website and catalog.

### Cloud Computing Applications

The coordinator of Library IT first investigated readily available cloud computing—or “software as service”—library applications because they appeared to offer the simplest solutions to meet both the library's and the Wolfe Viewing Center's goals. Cloud computing refers to applications and data housed by third-party providers on the web (in the “cloud”) instead of on local servers loaded with local software. Libraries have been using cloud computing for decades in the form of the OCLC bibliographic database and interlibrary loan service. The hardware and software are managed centrally, and subscribing libraries contribute or access data via client software or an Internet connection or both. A cloud computing solution would render unnecessary the need for the Wolfe Viewing Center to run its own web server and buy and manage local software. In addition, many cloud applications designed for managing personal libraries enable a kind of copy cataloging, making adding complex metadata by entering titles or scanning

ISBN numbers easy and avoiding the need for Wolfe Viewing Center staff to learn cataloging. The most promising cloud computing application was the “My Lists” functionality in open WorldCat.<sup>11</sup> Users sign up for a free WorldCat account, create public web lists from OCLC holdings, and add comments and notes to each record. Open WorldCat’s search capability, however, could not be limited to the created list and staff at OCLC confirmed that they were not planning to add that functionality. In addition, despite OCLC’s vast database, some of the Wolfe Viewing Center’s films were unique and uncataloged in OCLC WorldCat; those items, perhaps of most interest to researchers, would be missing from the catalog with no way to add them.

Two other popular cloud libraries the coordinator of Library IT considered were LibraryThing ([www.librarything.com](http://www.librarything.com)) and GoodReads ([www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)). Both are designed specifically for books, but the social networking environment, which is part of what makes them such compelling and popular applications, did not lend itself as easily to films. However, increasing numbers of LibraryThing users are adding films to their libraries, making it a possible venue for future projects. As this project developed, no prominent online cloud cataloging sites specifically for films existed, although options like GuruLib ([www.gurulib.com](http://www.gurulib.com)), iTrackMine ([www.itrackmine.com](http://www.itrackmine.com)), and DVD Corral ([www.DVDCorral.com](http://www.DVDCorral.com)) have recently become more popular. GuruLib in particular is designed to accept movies, books, music, and games; shows local library holdings for an item; offers the ability to search multiple libraries via Z39.50; and has a simple lending function that changes the status of the item and sends due dates via e-mail to the borrower. However, the inability to brand or customize the look of the Wolfe Viewing Center’s catalog in all of these platforms emerged as

a significant stumbling block for the center’s coordinator, and cloud computing was an unfamiliar concept for the film studies staff and faculty.

The design and functionality of most of these applications is oriented toward personal collections, social networking, and the informality of the open web. The coordinator of Library IT decided that the style and presentation of these sites was not an ideal fit for an academic research center. For smaller internal collections, nonacademic collections, or those less concerned with a scholarly presentation on the web, these applications might offer the simplest solutions to a searchable and web-accessible catalog, especially because many now offer the ability to export holdings in spreadsheet format to alleviate the fear of data loss if a vendor or site terminates service.

### **Personal Computer Library Programs**

The coordinator of Library IT also considered and rejected software programs designed for small libraries or individual media libraries. While many media library programs designed for home use exist, most are designed to run on individual personal computers and offer no web access. One can choose from many library catalog systems designed for small public, special, church, and school libraries, and some are even hosted by the software vendors so the Wolfe Viewing Center would not need to run its own server and could have the web access and server maintenance handled by the software vendors. The major problem, however, was the level of familiarity with library practices that the Wolfe Viewing Center would find difficult to acquire and oversee without substantial continuing library involvement.

### **Microsoft Access Database**

The coordinator of Library IT also experimented with creating a Microsoft

Access database, which contains a feature to generate static HTML pages. These could be placed on the campus web server in the same way departmental and office sites are hosted and supported, but the process required more technological expertise than the Wolfe Viewing Center could support. Creating a simple database for appropriate film metadata was easy, and the campus Information Technology Services (ITS) department could handle technical support for modifications, bugs, and so forth. In addition, adding a simple circulation module to a film catalog based on Microsoft Access would not be difficult. However, the process of exporting the database to webpages was neither trouble free nor transparent, and the database would have to be manipulated to provide reasonably useful browse lists and generate the pages at repeated intervals as the catalog expanded. Crude searching could be supplied by a Google custom search limited to the generated pages. This solution was deemed too complex for the Wolfe Viewing Center staff to manage, and the searching capability was too rudimentary.

### **WordPress and WordPress MU**

BGSU’s Center for Online and Blended Learning (COBL) and campus ITS had recently implemented an installation of WordPress MU, the multiple blog version of the popular open-source blogging platform WordPress. The WordPress platform and the WordPress Multi-User (MU) product have some functionality differences to note. The authors use “WordPress MU” when discussing features applicable only to the WordPress MU product and its installation at BGSU. “WordPress,” however, is used as a blanket term to indicate the feature is available both in WordPress and WordPress MU. WordPress MU is used for BGSU Blogs (<http://blogs.bgsu.edu>), where students, faculty, and staff can create one or more blogs for

whatever purpose they like: classroom use, e-portfolios, news and events, personal journals, student organization websites, and so on. More than just blogging software, WordPress is a lightweight content management system and has been used for such varied purposes as online storefronts, large corporation's websites, databases, and (perhaps most familiar to the library community) as a platform for Scriblio (<http://about.scriblio.net>), the free, open-source online public access catalog. The coordinator of Library IT decided that Scriblio would be too complicated for the Wolfe Viewing Center and the campus ITS to maintain, since it requires cataloging knowledge and a separate server and installation. She opted to experiment using WordPress MU instead, reasoning that technical support would be easier to transfer to already existing campus entities if the catalog was built using this platform.

WordPress had all of the requirements identified as necessary: easily customizable themes to build a visual identity unique to the Wolfe Viewing Center, server hosting by the campus ITS, web access, continuing technical support outside of the library, and built-in search capability. Wolfe Viewing Center staff would not have to learn library cataloging practice. In addition, the ability to define tags and categories would be useful in designing a structured catalog, as would WordPress' ability to identify differing levels of editing control for administrative users. WordPress has a large, active development community that has created many useful plug-ins and add-ons, including some specifically for digital library and scholarly applications. Documentation is easily available on the web and the campus technical support center was creating campus-specific guides and tutorials. Because WordPress was supported by the campus, the Wolfe Viewing Center's staff uneasiness about hosting with outside entities was allayed, and

they were reassured that this would be a stable, long-term platform.

### Creating an Un-Library Catalog

Once a solution was selected, the second author, an intern from the University of Pittsburgh Library and Information Sciences program, developed the cataloging schema to align with the Wolfe Viewing Center's needs and capabilities, cataloged the first one thousand items, and assumed the liaison and training duties with Wolfe Viewing Center staff as the project evolved.

#### Test Catalog

The intern created a test catalog of one hundred film entries to demonstrate the platform to the Wolfe Viewing Center staff. The coordinator of the Wolfe Viewing Center liked the functionality and visual appeal of the catalog and the platform's ability to serve as both catalog and website. With WordPress MU accepted as the center's future web presence and catalog, the next step was to decide what should be included in each entry. Because this was a catalog designed for audiovisual formats and primarily for a specific academic discipline, the authors considered how it would be searched, used, and maintained once out of the library's hands. This led to establishing a template that was easy to apply and contained discipline-specific information, including director, actors involved, and genre, such as noir or western. The authors wanted to create a catalog and workflow that could build on stable, readily available descriptions for items while using the flexibility of WordPress to depart from standard library cataloging practices and expand the functionality of the catalog in other ways.

The center coordinator will hire student staff to maintain the catalog

and run the Wolfe Viewing Center on a daily basis. Student responsibilities will include checking materials in and out, basic technical troubleshooting, entering new items into the catalog, and altering and updating records of the older items. Therefore the cataloging method had to be easy to teach and perpetuate. Learning and using standard library audiovisual cataloging practice was not feasible for the Wolfe Viewing Center staff without ongoing library training and involvement, something the chair of Collections and Technical Services and the library dean were adamant about avoiding.

#### Defining a Standard Entry Template

The authors and the Wolfe Viewing Center's coordinator needed to define a standard entry form for each item cataloged to maintain consistency of data. Each entry (see figure 1 for an example entry) in the catalog would be what WordPress defines as a "post." This is a snippet of HTML created with a "What You See Is What You Get" (WYSIWYG) editor and contains a title and a box where text, images, video, and other data can be added, and provides the ability to designate tags and categories. The intern entered bibliographic information on the basis of the credits of the film or the packaging of the item, if available, and cross-checked for authority control in either OCLC's WorldCat or the Internet Movie Database (IMDB). The IMDB ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)) is an online database containing factual information regarding film and television projects, such as titles and other bibliographic information as well as casting, awards, and release dates. WorldCat records were used most frequently, confirming the people involved with the production of the film, the place of publication, summaries (if not contained on back of the film's container), and some aspects of the notes (e.g., whether it was based on a book, special features,

## The Woman on the Beach

May 5, 2009

**La Femme Sue La Plage**

**Call Number:** VHS00770

**by** Frank Davis; Michael Hogan; Mitchell Wilson; Harry J Wild; Leo Tover; Hanns Eisler; Joan Bennett; Charles Bickford; Robert Ryan

**Format:** VHS

**Language:** English

**Publisher:** Paris : Editions Montparnasse, 1994.

**Notes:** Originally released in 1947 (105 mins.); based on the book by Mitchell Wilson;

**Summary:** A WWII Coast Guard veteran, Lt. Scott Burnett (Robert Ryan), is plagued by nightmares of his combat days. One day, he meets a woman, Peggy Butler (Joan Bennett), walking on a beach, picking up pieces of wood. Butler is married to a grumpy, blind painter, Ted Butler (Charles Bickford). Despite his affections for his fiancé Eve (Nan Leslie), whose father is a boat builder, Scott falls in love with Peggy and soon breaks off the engagement. Peggy reveals that she blinded her husband years earlier by throwing a glass at him during an ugly spat, ruining his career and her own ambitions to be an upper-class socialite. Scott fears that Ted is suspicious that he is having an affair with Peggy and becomes so paranoid that he begins to believe that Ted is faking his blindness — and sets out to prove it.

**OCLC #:** 35985474 and 65290685

**Added:** May 5, 2009

**This item is part of the Ralph H. Wolfe Collection**

Categories **Drama, Film Noir, Romance** Tags **Black and White, Books on Film, Jean Renoir**

Figure 1. Example of a Catalog Entry

etc.). WorldCat also helped fill in information that could not be determined from the item in the Wolfe Viewing Center's possession because of the condition of the film and container (or lack of the container entirely). IMDB was used to supply facts, including title information (primarily for foreign films), genre suggestions, and the release date and other information of the original film.

In addition to this template with bibliographic elements, the authors developed the following guidelines.

Because of the prevalence of foreign films within the collection, the original title of the film as well as the English version of the title is included. If the film has an alternate English title, both titles are listed. (This is to assist patrons who may be unaware of a film's additional titles.)

If the item has any additional footage, such as behind-the-scenes clips or

trailers, this information is included in the "Notes" section.

If more than one copy of an item in the same format is held but each item has different bibliographic information, both copies are included on the same entry with differing information distinguished by copy number. For example, the publisher information might include "Copy 1: Publisher 1, Place 1: Year 1; Copy 2: Publisher 2, Place 2: Year 2." (This eliminates extra entries in the catalog and allows the same titles to be grouped together while still accounting for new or special editions of the same film.)

The UL's cataloging department did some "original" cataloging in OCLC for items not in WorldCat; that record was not associated with BGSU, and the time spent cataloging these items was minimal. The WorldCat record then formed the basis of the Wolfe catalog record.

### Authority Control

Because WordPress uses full-text searching, the catalog needed a form of authority control to ensure the search results would be consistent. A few options were available, although none was a perfect fit for the Wolfe Viewing Center. The Library of Congress (LC) Authorities (<http://authorities.loc.gov>) file records were too complex to be considered a viable option. Although this website is freely accessible, the differences in authorized headings and reference headings were confusing for the Wolfe Viewing Center's staff. For example, Lillian Gish has two different entries in the LC Authorities file: one is an authorized heading and one is a reference heading, yet both are "Gish, Lillian, 1893-1993." An in-house authority control system, in which the Wolfe Viewing Center would keep a list of the personal names and companies used in each entry and the names' alternative forms, was another possibility, but the ongoing maintenance would be a cumbersome task, more than the Wolfe Viewing Center's staff could manage for normal operations. Eventually, after extensive exploration of both resources, the authors decided the catalog would use both the freely accessible version of OCLC's WorldCat and IMDB. BGSU's OCLC representative verified that using OCLC data for cataloging materials in the Wolfe Viewing Center was within the terms of BGSU's service agreement. The associated OCLC number was therefore included in the entry for further information on the title. IMDB was used as a reference work to verify facts (e.g., spelling of proper names and publication dates).

### Structuring Access Points in WordPress MU: Categories and Tagging

After the initial cataloging, the intern assigned WordPress categories to each entry on the basis of the film's genre,

which was determined by either the container of the film, WorldCat, or IMDB; these are provided in table 1. The coordinator of the Wolfe Viewing Center requested the categories be film genres and submitted a list to the intern of industry-standard genre names to be used accordingly. Categories in WordPress allow a structured presentation of groups similar to a subject browse in a traditional catalog. Categories can be predefined or defined on the fly, appearing as a menu with a “create new category” option. They also can be arranged in hierarchies, allowing categories to be subdivided. Each category creates a stable URL that can be linked in other resources, allowing an instructor, for example, to link directly to a particular genre or other category from online guides or course shells. This also meant WordPress could be used to create a course reserve system within the Wolfe Viewing Center’s catalog. Figure 2 shows the category named “Course Reserves” and sub-categories for specific classes, such as “Film 120—Introduction to Film Studies.” This allows students and Wolfe Viewing Center staff to identify course materials quickly and easily in a way that closely mirrors the course reserve modules in academic library catalogs. Since categories are flexible and easy to add, one also could create categories for particular instructors.

Finally, the library’s intern applied tags to each entry to give users more ways to access the entries in the catalog. Every entry was tagged with a director’s name (if applicable) and a set of eighteen predetermined tags (see table 2) that serve as discipline- and curriculum-appropriate access points for BGSU users of the catalog. WordPress’s ability to cross-reference using hyperlinks was one of the most dynamic aspects of using the platform. Although the films of a specific genre and a specific director were linked by categories and tags, patrons using the catalog may want to see other ways

that films relate to each other. This was done by adding an “also” field to each entry, if applicable. Included in this field were hyperlinks to internal catalog entries for the same film in a different format, sequels and prequels, or films that were related by subjects not predefined in the categories or

tags. For example, all movies about Frankenstein were linked together (see figure 3). This allows users to find related items via informal subject or theme browsing, which is easily created by Wolfe Viewing Center staff to collocate items in the way that is most useful for them and their patrons.

**Table 1.** Film Categories

Action	Horror	Western
Drama	Romance	Documentary
Gangster	War	Film noir
Mystery	Comedy	Musical
Thriller	Fantasy	Television series
Biography	Melodrama	
Family	Science fiction	

**Table 2.** Predetermined Tags

Animated	Film-making	Books on film
Bowling Green	Lillian Gish	Dorothy Gish
Eva Marie Saint	Silent film	History
Library of African Cinema	Black and white	Shakespeare
Short	Disney	
Award*	Foreign film	
Crime	Mini-series	

\*Only used for Emmy and Academy Awards

### Film Catalog

Film Catalog

- Course Reserves
  - FILM 120: Intro to Film
    - Section 1: Instructor Jones
    - Section 2: Instructor Smith
  - FILM 608: History of Film Noir

**Figure 2.** “Course Reserves” Category with Subcategories

**Also:** This film also available on VHS (VHS00758); See other interpretations of Frankenstein: The James Whale directed, Frankenstein (VHS00354); the Charles Barton directed Bud Abbott & Lou Costello Meet Frankenstein (VHS00759); the Roger Corman directed Frankenstein Unbound (VHS00760); In addition, see films about the creation of the book Frankenstein: the Ken Russell directed Gothic (VHS00734); the Gonzalo Suárez directed Rowing with the Wind (VHS00171); and the Ivan Passer directed Haunted Summer (VHS00720);

**OCLC #:** 40427811

**Added:** January 20, 2009

**This item is part of the Ralph H. Wolfe Collection**

**Figure 3.** “Also” Field Linking Movies about Frankenstein

### Call Numbers

The next obstacle to overcome was the type of call number system to use for locating materials on the shelf. Since these items would not be part of the UL collection, the call number system could be unique and apply solely to the Wolfe Viewing Center. The Wolfe Viewing Center's coordinator wanted a simple way of connecting the tangible item to the entry in the catalog. The authors discussed with the coordinator the probable shelving arrangements and possible requesting habits of the center's users. Based on experience with other library media collections and the equipment that would be available at the Wolfe Viewing Center, they decided that DVDs and VHS materials would not be shelved together. The rationale was if the collection circulated, users would request a title in the format that is compatible with their media players. This made accession numbers the most easily managed location system for the Wolfe Viewing Center to use. The library's intern and the center's coordinator also decided that different formats (i.e., DVD and VHS) would each receive their own accession number and duplicates in each format would be accounted for by adding "Copy 2," "Copy 3," and so forth to the record.

### Circulation

Circulation functions using WordPress will be more complicated to implement. With the Wolfe Viewing Center's coordinator indicating that currently this would be a closed stack collection with all films viewed in the Wolfe Viewing Center, the authors advised that inventory tracking be done either by having patrons leave their student or staff identification cards with Wolfe Viewing Center staff when viewing an item or by creating a paper- or card-based circulation system, similar to what many library special collections use. This is easily accomplished with film formats because the VHS or DVD

case has the relevant metadata already on it; the case could be held with an ID or pull slip containing patron information. Alternately, the comment field for each record could be used as a note field for circulation information. If the Wolfe Viewing Center intends to circulate the items outside the center, then a more elaborate inventory system likely will need to be created. However, because no decision had been made about wider circulation, the authors advised against spending time creating a technological solution before it was needed.

### An E-Resource with Expanded Capabilities

Once the Wolfe Viewing Center is open, the Wolfe Viewing Center video catalog will be cataloged as an e-resource in the University Libraries' Electronic Resource Management module. Library catalogers have assigned subject headings for each e-resource, and the UL's OPAC has a database-by-subject portal inside the library catalog, ensuring that users searching for films or movies as keywords or subjects—or browsing e-resources in those categories—will find the Wolfe Viewing Center catalog and be able to click through to it. Treating similar implementations as e-resources allows users to discover the catalogs through the OPAC without requiring that smaller, idiosyncratic collections conform to standard library cataloging.

In addition, by virtue of WordPress's built-in social networking and Web 2.0 capabilities, the curators or caretakers of satellite collections like the Wolfe Viewing Center can, if they choose, create an enriched curricular or research experience for users. For example, the commenting feature in WordPress could be used for user reviews of the films in the Wolfe Viewing Center, or a "reviews" category could be created and classes could be assigned to write more formal

reviews that could be published and linked to films in the catalog. Other catalogs containing different formats or types of items could use commenting to support book group discussions around designated texts; RSS feeds for new items can be embedded in other webpages or social media platforms or subscribed to by interested patrons; and a WordPress plug-in can be installed to automatically "mobilize" the site, creating a catalog that is optimized for viewing on a smartphone. Since WordPress MU also allows the creation of static HTML pages, Wolfe Viewing Center staff will be able to create as many pages as they like, making the catalog function as the main webpage for the center as well as the catalog.

### Personnel, Deliverables, and Time Spent on the Project

The entire project, from the testing of WordPress MU as a video catalog platform through the cataloging of the collection, took approximately four months working eight hours per week. While the coordinator of Cataloging and the chair of Collections and Technical Services provided advice and consultation on occasion, the library was able to avoid using permanent, full-time staff on this project except for the coordinator of Library IT's initial testing of possible databases platforms and experimentation with WordPress MU. Because one goal of the project was to use as few professional library resources as possible and to ensure that the process could be learned and used by nonlibrary staff in the future, the library's intern defined, described, and entered the collection's one thousand items and created a set of instructions for the Wolfe Viewing Center coordinator that was approved by the coordinator of Library IT. The intern also took over the liaison duties with the Wolfe Viewing Center's coordinator. The authors were confident



that Wolfe Viewing Center's student staff, with training provided by library staff, could manage the platform and use the WorldCat and IMDB records to maintain data integrity. Ongoing technology support could be supplied by campus ITS, and library staff could withdraw from the cataloging and support process entirely.

### Problems Encountered and Lessons Learned

An ongoing problem was the difficulty of explaining both library practice and standards and the technical underpinnings of the WordPress platform to the center coordinator and associated faculty. Library practice is arcane to the nonlibrarian and, combined with unfamiliarity with the underlying technology, convincing the center coordinator that the yet-to-be hired student staff could easily learn to manage this particular implementation of a catalog was an ongoing process. Making the test catalog a fully functional demonstration, attractively branded with an appropriate filmic visual theme, with dummy reserve classes, "About the Center" pages, and other enhancements, was time well spent, as it was a professional-looking and persuasive artifact.

During the time the authors were creating the Wolfe Viewing Center catalog, the UL received an inquiry from the BGSU Women's Center about cataloging their book collection in the UL's catalog. In a few phone conversations and e-mail messages, the authors demonstrated the utility of a BGSU-supported WordPress MU blog for a small-scale catalog. The BGSU Women's Center created their simplified Women's Center Library Catalog by referring to the Wolfe Viewing Center catalog as an example, with no further help from the library. As with the Wolfe Viewing Center, WordPress MU allowed the UL to take a service-oriented, helpful stance while avoiding lengthy explanations about library

practice and platforms, negotiations with administrators at all levels, and repeated internal discussions about the risks and problems of adding satellite collections to the catalog.

### Conclusion

Spending time and resources to create an alternative to full cataloging in the ILS has allowed the UL to offer an attractive and useful option for satellite collections on campus and to restrict the UL's role to advice and minimal training. The initial process of finding the correct platform for the Wolfe Viewing Center and a cataloging procedure required some input from library professionals, but the time saved by both senior library management and cataloging staff in the future will be substantial. This online catalog will allow the Wolfe Viewing Center to grow and change its collection records at the manager's discretion while maintaining a high standard of service.

Satellite collections can provide a tailored service to patrons of the academic library without adding material acquisition costs to the library's budget. However, as libraries anticipate more staffing cuts and furloughs, increasing workload responsibilities by adding satellite collections to the ILS might seem troublesome. In addition, the ever-changing nature of these smaller collections can make maintenance time-consuming. Using a similar process to the one described in this paper, libraries can provide patrons with information on these satellite collections without the pitfalls associated with adding them directly to the OPAC. The satellite collection can then be treated as an e-resource instead of a bundle of off-site individual catalog records.

The current library administration feels that the UL invested its staff and technology resources wisely by seeking an alternative strategy for cataloging a satellite library collection. By using

WordPress MU and creating a solution that is managed by the owners of the Wolfe Viewing Center, the many problems of earlier satellite collections on campus have been avoided while still maintaining good standing with faculty and other stakeholders. The library contributed technological knowledge, database, design, and cataloging expertise while using a platform that has no implications for the library ILS or library services.

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