

Rules, Privacy, and Ethics

Challenges in Creating Author Name Change Guidelines

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People change their names for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, gender transition, change in marital status, and religious conversion. Guidance on the metadata management of author name changes for the myriad resources in a library's discovery system is elusive and absent. Executing metadata for name changes creates many challenges in a rapidly advancing infrastructure of emerging discovery technologies, aggregators with shared metadata in multiple schemas, and numerous formats in varied platforms. Moreover, it is difficult to find a balanced approach to ethically apply evolving cataloging and name authority control rules to suit the linked data environment. This case study examines an academic library's process in creating guidance for implementing name changes. The paper reports on the stakeholders involved, resources consulted, dilemmas considered, and decisions made in the development of the library's author name change guidelines.

In August of 2023, after being notified that a faculty member's publications were appearing in the library catalog under a previous name, the Technical Services Department of Milner Library, Illinois State University, began discussions of when and where to update metadata for authors whose name or names have changed. Because the department includes a Metadata Unit that works with platforms such as Digital Commons, ArchivesSpace, and CONTENTdm, the possibility of updating metadata beyond MARC records quickly became a topic of discussion. Results from these platforms were included in catalog search results via Primo VE, and it was decided to update names there as well to make results more consistent. It was not possible for the Technical Services Department to make results entirely consistent in every case, as some results came through the Central Discovery Index and would need to be updated with publishers of books or articles to make changes. The group ultimately developed guidelines that recommend making updates to metadata on request from creators (with the service publicized to faculty so they are aware it is an option) on platforms the Technical Services Department can access.

Literature Review

Name Authority Control

The traditional purposes of name authority control are to identify and disambiguate authors' names and to collocate works of authors who use multiple names under one heading or authorized access point for indexing and display. However, research reveals the current scope of name authority records (NARs) for personal names has expanded to include biographical information.¹ In 1999, the International

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Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Functional Requirements and Numbering of Authority Records (FRANAR) working group intended to improve on authority data when it expanded the scope for name authority records to not only support the user tasks of identifying and disambiguating, but also contextualizing an entity and representing relationships between works or entities. In 2009, adhering to FRANAR guidelines, the Functional Requirements for Authority Data (FRAD) conceptual model expanded on the types of information about a person that should be recorded in an authority file to include information such as gender, place of birth and death, associated country, place of residence, affiliation, address, language used, field of activity, profession or occupation, and a biography or history.² These attributes were systematized into the current cataloging standard Resource Description and Access (RDA) implemented by Library of Congress in 2013. With the introduction and adoption of FRAD and RDA, “the original scope of a name authority record was broadened from simply that of a carrier of an authorized heading or access point to a description of an entity with the development of an expanded list of attributes that can be included in name authority records.”³

Criticism and concerns about this expanded scope abound in the literature. There is unease over matters of privacy and ethics, and questions raised in the library community as to whether recording personal information is warranted and necessary for authority records.⁴ Amber Billey states that by adding more information into authority files there is the potential to harm people by “misidentifying or censoring information through cataloger bias or by capturing personally identifying information that could be used against the person.”⁵ Moreover, the risk of detrimental consequences in the linked data environment, where metadata can be reused with increased visibility and data creators no longer have control of the original data, is too great to justify the inclusion of personal information. Billey posits that catalogers should revert to pre-RDA authority practices.⁶

Recording Gender in Personal Name Authority Records

To record new RDA elements, many fields have been added to the MARC name authority record format, including the 375 field for gender. Much criticism focused on the inclusion of the gender field and the specific rule to record gender found in RDA rule 9.7 in Section 3. The literature challenged gender as a descriptive attribute for personal names, critiqued how the Library of Congress was instructing Name Authority Cooperative Program (NACO) catalogers to record elements about gender, questioned the necessity of a gender field in a name authority record, and highlighted the potentially harmful ramifications of recording this information.⁷ Kelly J. Thompson analyzed contents of MARC 375 fields in NARs and found that 65 percent resulted in the outing of self-identified transgender authors. The findings reveal that catalogers’ ability to name and assign labels for gender identities of authors is frequently outing trans people. The research also showed the MARC 400 and 670 fields in the NARs contained outing information.⁸

Additionally, RDA rule 9.7 limited NACO catalogers to a binary controlled vocabulary for gender: male, female, or not known. The requirement of a binary label excluded many transgender and non-binary authors, and those who do not wish to disclose their gender. To have this rule changed, catalogers formed a group to lobby the international RDA Steering Committee and succeeded.⁹

To address ongoing concerns raised by the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) membership, in 2016 an ad hoc task group was formed to examine best practices on recording information about gender in NARs. The group was directed to draft instructions on recording information about gender in MARC Authority Field 375. The report discussed best practices for recording information about gender, including for persons who do not identify with binary gender terminology, and submitted recommendations to be published in the DCM Z1, LC-PCC Policy Statements, and Library of Congress Demographic Terms.¹⁰

In 2022, a Revised Report on Recording Gender in Personal Name Authority Records was released by the PCC Ad Hoc Task Group on Recording Gender in Personal Name Authority Records. The group was charged to update the original report, based on extensive feedback on survey responses from May 2018, PCCList discussions, criticism in the literature, and policy changes since the initial report. The report was a marked change from earlier recommendations. Most notably the optional recording of the gender field was no longer recommended. Instead, catalogers were instructed: “Do not record the RDA gender element (MARC 375) in personal name authority records. Delete existing 375 fields when editing a record for any other reason.”¹¹ This recommendation is also now recorded in the Library of Congress Descriptive Cataloging Manual.¹²

RDA cataloging rules are evolving to accommodate the changing landscape of a shared linked data environment; however, privacy and bias issues continue to exist and are critical concerns in this model.

Ethics, Privacy, Identity Management

With FRAD and the transition of the theoretical framework from “authority records for personal names to the records for persons,” the presence of personal information in authority records creates practical and ethical concerns for catalogers.¹³ Billey asserts that once catalogers record metadata in the authority record, a person’s information becomes available on the Library of Congress authority website (id.loc.gov), where the metadata becomes part of an open dataset for anyone to download and reuse.¹⁴ In “Identity Theft: How Authority Control Undermines Women’s Agency,” Michelle M. Kazmer discusses how thorough authority control efforts intended to facilitate effective retrieval in the linked data landscape disproportionately affect the privacy of women compared to men. She cites examples of name authority records that explicitly detail marriages and divorces to justify changes to an authorized access point; another example she provides is the pseudonyms women held that were never intended to be associated with their real identity publicly but are recorded in their name authority records. Kazmer notes that “authority control . . . has by definition involved the flattening and narrowing of identity, privileging some names and roles over others.”¹⁵

How to address name changes, regardless of the reason, is complicated. Violet B. Fox and Kelly Swickard argue that “to accurately reflect people’s identities, NACO contributors should err on the side of contacting creators whenever there is a concern about privacy issues.”¹⁶ Fox and Swickard propose a new approach to authority work with an “ethics of care framework.” Instead of solely focusing on the perspective of the information seeker, the cataloger creating the authority record should also consider

the subject of the information in question as a person, and not just data to be discovered. With this mindset, perhaps the cataloger can readily contemplate potential problems surrounding the privacy and safety of the described person before adding the metadata or even creating the record.¹⁷ This framework considers the biases a cataloger may possess when recording a person's private information, and also how in the current landscape sensitive data is not recorded in a closed system, but is made publicly accessible and shared between organizations in the new environment of linked data and modern discovery systems. For example, the Library of Congress Name Authority File (LCNAF) data connects with other name datasets such as the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF), the International Standard Name Identifier (ISNI), and Wikidata.¹⁸

Identity management systems such as these manage identity description data that could be used instead of the LCNAF and serve to disambiguate and collocate. Jinfang Niu examined newer identity management systems solutions for evolving name authority control to deal with the increasingly complex and dynamic information environments libraries find themselves in. Examples are Cornell University's VIVO, ISNI, ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID), IMDb (Internet Movie Database), and Google Scholar. ORCID and Google Scholar shift the onus of identity management to the authors, which may be a solution to the ethics and privacy issues as authors know their identity preferences best.¹⁹ Also citing ORCID as a viable answer, Thompson supports linked data and self-identification as solutions where the author self-describes as much or little as they choose. ORCID, a unique researcher identifier system, offers control of privacy levels and their identifiers have been adopted by many systems that track scholarly output, journal article publishing platforms, and government granting agencies for application processes.²⁰

There is a growing paradigm shift from name authority work to identity management, and John Reimer states that "identity management operates by associating a registered identifier with characterizing data which specify a single identity or identified entity. It is distinguished by its focus on differentiating entities through the use of identifiers."²¹ PCC established the Program for Cooperative Cataloging Task Group on Identity Management in 2016 to explore and provide a framework for coordination, consultation, and education in the realm of identity management.²² To move away from privacy and ethical issues in name authority files for unique name strings, Billey argues systems need to "coin and use URIs for machine processing, as well as utilize the additional metadata for disambiguation by the end-user" and recommends that catalogers "focus on identity management and linked data reuse in library cataloging."²³ Examples of strategic initiatives are the National Strategy for Shareable Local Name Authorities National Forum, NACO Lite, and the PCC Task Group on Identity Management in NACO.²⁴

Name Changes and System Challenges

Author names can change for numerous reasons, including divorce, gender transition, marriage, remarriage, religion, pseudonyms, Indigenous and international authors being assigned incorrect names, mistranslated names, and misspelled names. Name changes can also create many challenges.²⁵ In their study of name changes for women and authority challenges, Denise Beaubien Bennett and

Priscilla Williams demonstrated that incomplete or inaccurate results occur when index databases fail to connect name variations, which in turn weakens the exposure of women's publications.²⁶ Lorraine J. Pellack and Lori Osmus Kappmeyer investigated the impact on the indexing of scholarly articles for women after they changed their names. They uncovered multiple ways name changes cause search problems based on how they are recorded in various databases, indexes, and authority records.²⁷

Community Best Practices and Guidance

While the PCC Task Group on Gender is assigned to come up with best practices in descriptive cataloging and name changes related to gender, there are organizations within the community that have released their own best practices. The Trans Metadata Collective “is a group of dozens of cataloguers, librarians, archivists, scholars, and information professionals with a concerted interest to improve the description and classification of trans and gender diverse people in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums, and Special Collections (GLAMS) and other information systems.” They have released a Trans Metadata Collective Best Practices document describing the “description, cataloging, and classification of information resources as well as the creation of metadata about trans and gender diverse people, including authors and other creators.”²⁸ Notably, the Trans Metadata Collective is one of the few groups to issue name change guidance not only for authority-controlled access points, but also descriptive metadata.

Other organizations have come together specifically to address the nuances of name changes such as the Name Change Policy Working Group (NCPWG). The NCPWG is a collective of researchers, scholars, and activists who have developed guidance for the publishing world on inclusive name change policies and practices since 2019. Their website lists resources for both authors and publishers and includes best practices and guidelines.²⁹ The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) also announced in 2021 the formation of a working group to develop a recommended practice to update author name changes in the academic record after publication as a result of identity change. However as of this writing, the progress of the working group has not been documented on the NISO website.³⁰

Publishers' Name Change Policies

In recent years, scholarly publication norms around author name changes for previously published works have undergone significant changes. As noted by Christine Smith, Charlotte Schonwetter, and Christopher Smith in their case study on the De Gruyter name change policy, under traditional academic publishing conventions, any change to a previously published article—including an author name change—was typically announced as a formal “revision” to the article. This practice, while ostensibly aimed at preserving the integrity of the scholarly record, has the potential to be particularly problematic for trans authors who may be outed without their consent by the traditional revisions process.³¹ One notable early example of a publisher revising its name change policy in recognition of this problem is the American Chemical Society (ACS), which in September 2020 announced a new trans-inclusive name change policy that would allow authors to change their name in ACS publications for any reason, without requiring proof of legal name change or other documentation to support the

change. The ACS policy also explicitly states that the name change is not treated as a correction, so co-authors are not notified, and no public announcement is made of the change.³² The change is, in this sense, a “silent” one.

In January 2021, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) released “A Vision for a More Trans-Inclusive Publishing World,” a guest article that has since been cited as a guiding influence in many publisher name change policies.³³ Noting the potential “epistemic labor, risk, and trauma for transgender authors” presented by the continued circulation of their previous name, the article offers a set of principles for trans-inclusive name changes in scholarly publishing. The article notes the significant time and effort currently required to change one’s name once it has been published in an academic journal, and argues that, while trans people stand to benefit the most from changes in publication norms that make name changes easier, such a shift would also benefit authors who change their names for other reasons, such as religious conversion or change in marital status. The article proposes five high-level principles to guide name change policies in publishing:

1. **Accessibility:** Name changes should be available to authors upon request without legal documentation, unnecessary barriers, burdens, or labor placed upon the author making the request.
2. **Comprehensiveness:** Name changes should remove all instances of an author’s previous name from the records maintained and disseminated by the publisher.
3. **Invisibility:** Name changes should not draw attention to the gender identity of an author, nor create a clear juxtaposition between the current name and the previous name.
4. **Expediency and Simplicity:** Name changes should be implemented in a timely manner, and with a minimum of bureaucratic overhead.
5. **Recurrence and Maintenance:** Publishers should regularly audit and correct new instances of changed names to prevent ongoing dissemination of incorrect information.

In addition to outlining these principles, the COPE guest article also calls for “better identity infrastructures,” such as greater use of systems like ORCID to manage attribution of authorship, to decrease reliance on name strings for persistent citation.

Following the publication of the COPE guidelines, a growing number of academic publishers have issued updated author name change policies, including publishers such as Wiley,³⁴ De Gruyter,³⁵ and Springer Nature.³⁶ Like the ACS statement, these policies typically allow name changes to occur “silently,” without a formal revision announcement being issued; many pledge to change the name in both the article and its metadata in some fashion (for example, Wiley will “republish the paper and redeliver the updated metadata to indexing services”³⁷). Not only large academic publishers, but also individual journals have issued statements on their author name update policy. For example, in 2022, Code4Lib—explicitly citing the COPE guidelines—announced a new “post-publication name change policy” whereby requests to change a previously published author’s name will be honored by fully replacing the author’s name online and in indexing metadata, without correction notices.³⁸

A slightly different approach has been taken by JSTOR, which issued its revised author name change policy in 2021. JSTOR's default policy is to add the author's current name to the metadata for their work, while still retaining the former name so that both will retrieve the resource; however, "for authors who wish to minimize the appearance of their former name in their work, such as for transgender authors," they will offer the option of removing their former name from article metadata, as well as redacting it from the page image and optical character recognition (OCR) text.³⁹

Background

On August 15, 2023, Illinois State University associate director for strategic communications notified the associate dean for information assets that a faculty member with a recent book publication was appearing under their previous name in library catalog search results. The book was published digitally, and both the name in the book and metadata for the book on the publisher's website reflected the author's current name. Links to the author's faculty webpage, the publisher's page for the book, and the author's X (formerly Twitter) account also showed the current name. Given this evidence, it was decided it was not necessary to contact the author before updating the metadata for their name in the relevant catalog record.

The head of technical services updated the author's Name Authority Record (including adding a MARC 400 field with the previous authorized form of the name to automatically change those entries in MARC 100 and MARC 700 fields), manually changed the name in local Alma Network Zone MARC records, and emailed VIAF requesting they update their entry for the author. An OCLC senior data analyst replied that the NAR in VIAF would be updated when OCLC received their next update from Library of Congress and that other VIAF contributors with the name in their authority file had been notified. The OCLC senior data analyst also clarified that gender information in the VIAF entry had been added based on the MARC 375 field in the NAR and was still displayed even though that field had been deleted from the NAR. The head of technical services also searched for but could not locate an entry for the author under either name in ISNI or a Wikidata item.

Although the immediate request from the associate director for strategic communications had been addressed, this started a further discussion on where and when metadata for name changes should be updated by the library. The library uses Alma and Primo VE, and even though the name had been updated in MARC records the author's previous name still appeared in some catalog search results. These results came from metadata in articles included in search results by the Central Discovery Index (CDI) and Digital Commons (the institutional repository) where the faculty member was listed as a dissertation advisor under their previous name. These theses had also been deposited in ProQuest Theses and Dissertations database per university policy using the faculty member's previous name. The associate dean for information assets contacted ProQuest about updating the name there and was told that metadata could be updated on request, but if the actual PDF were to be changed there would be a \$47 correction fee per page updated.

On August 17, 2023 the head of technical services posted a query on the Facebook page Troublesome Catalogers and Magical Metadata Fairies, asking, “Does anyone have a written policy for updating names (where you do make updates, where you don’t, if you only do it by request or you do it if you notice a change elsewhere, etc.) they’d be willing to share?”⁴⁰ After some clarification on the meaning of the question, the majority of responses were by Robin Fay, cataloging/metadata librarian, trainer, and instructor at Library Juice, who in part responded that she followed NACO guidelines and judged requests on a case-by-case basis, and wrote “I find this conversation so interesting as in many libraries, digital archives/IRs/digital humanities are completely separate from cataloging. So, there is no overarching QC and data management plan that bridges all sides of resource description work.” As of this writing no one has shared a written policy or guidelines. It was decided that it would be useful to develop guidelines to make the process of updating metadata for author names consistent and provide a document to refer to when there were questions. Such guidelines could also be useful in promoting this service to university colleagues who might not be aware that metadata could be updated at all, and in explaining why it could be updated in some areas but not others by university librarians.

Creating the Guidelines

An initial policy was drafted by the head of technical services, with feedback from the cataloging and metadata librarian, metadata librarian, and the cataloging unit coordinator. The university archivist and the special collections librarian were also consulted, as they and their staff created and edited finding aids in ArchivesSpace.

Before the guidelines were finalized, various options were discussed via comments in a Microsoft Teams document and over email. This included a decision to change the initial title of the document from “Name Update Policy” to “Name Update Guidelines” because Technical Services personnel were not allowed to unilaterally create official university policy and referring to it as a policy might alarm administrators. Policies are the purview of departments external to the library. It was not deemed necessary or desirable for the workflow to go through the entire campus bureaucracy, which also would have taken a considerable amount of time, so they were re-titled as “guidelines.”

Discussions centered primarily around two topics: (1) When do we update names?, and (2) Where do we update or not update names? Two tables were created where all likely questions or options could be listed and discussed in the document itself or via comments. The first table (table 1) addressed the question of when names would be updated.

The Technical Services Department decided that actively monitoring name changes was not practical, and our patrons would be best served by actively publicizing the service and updating names on request or when Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) cataloging guidelines called for an edit or update. As with any new service, being able to devote the necessary staff time to the work was a factor. The Technical Services Department felt we could implement this policy in part because we were only updating names across multiple platforms for Illinois State University faculty, staff, and students. While we would follow cataloging practice and update Name Authority Records for any creator when there

Table 1. When to Update Names

When...	Notes, comments, questions, etc.
When we are informed by a third party or notice a change on our own	Do we notify the person whose name we are updating?
Upon request only we do not publicize the service	No monitoring on our part, but some people might not even know this is something we can do.
Upon request but we actively publicize the service	There will still be some metadata not under our control and we might not be able to completely eradicate someone's deadname.
We actively monitor names for updates and make changes when we notice	Manually check faculty webpages on a set schedule.

Table 2. Where to Update Names

Platform	Notes
Name Authority Records (NARs)	People cannot do this on their own and NARs primary names should reflect most recent usage.
MARC 100, 700 fields	Should flip automatically when the NAR is done.
MARC 245 c fields	May no longer match the statement of responsibility on the PDF item if updated, or title page for print.
MARC 505 (table of contents), 520 (summary), or other 5xx (note) fields	These could be copied from the text (table of contents) in which case they would no longer match with the item if updated, or be free text created by the cataloger (summaries, 500 fields) in which case there is no exactly corresponding text in the item to match.
VIAF	VIAF will get updates from Library of Congress (LC) for the main entry/name if the NAR is done, but might still pull in (possibly erroneous) gender from other national catalogs or LC if it hasn't been removed. They will contact these other libraries on request, and are going to discuss what do when one National Library has gender information but others do not.
Wikidata	This might get changed back by others in the public. Do we do the previous/ deadname as an alternate name or delete it entirely?
Wikipedia	This might get changed back by others in the public. Do we change the name in good faith and hope it does not get reverted?
Notify other national libraries or organizations (ISNI, ProQuest, etc.)	VIAF might develop a policy to notify some of them, but it would only be ones linked to the entry in VIAF.
CONTENTdm	Metadata might not match what is in the objects if we update, although it might also match some objects and not others, depending on when the name change occurred.

was a name change we discovered, we limited updates where we actively sought out metadata with out-of-date names to people associated with our institution. This created a limited pool of people who might request more extensive updates, and faculty being by far the most likely to have published materials that would appear in catalog search results limited the pool even further.

There was also discussion of where to update (or not update) names based on a similar table of possibilities (table 2).

Table 3. Archives Name Updates

Platform	Notes
ArchivesSpace finding aids controlled headings—LC subject headings (LCSHs) and NARs	Would match what is in the MARC record if updated. We could notify Archives but it is up to them if they want to change the name or not and where.
ArchivesSpace finding aids free text	It might not match what is in the documents, although it might also match some and not others, depending on when the name change occurred.

Table 4. Special Collections Name Updates

Platform	Notes
ArchivesSpace finding aids controlled headings—LCSHs and NARs	Would match what is in the MARC record if updated. We could notify Special Collections but it is up to them if they want to change the name or not and where.
ArchivesSpace finding aids free text	It might not match what is in the documents if done, although it could match some documents and not others, depending on when the name change occurred.

Table 5. Scholarly Communications Name Updates

Platform	Notes
Names entered as metadata in Digital Commons (the author’s deadname is still listed as First Advisor on several Electronic Theses and Dissertations for example)	If updated, we will not match what is in the item, but will match what is in the catalog record. We do not currently have a scholarly communications librarian.

There is also metadata in platforms that Technical Services is not directly responsible for, but they do appear in Primo VE. We could make recommendations for these areas: Archives (table 3), Special Collections (table 4), and Scholarly Communications (table 5).

Although the decision to update the name authority record and any bibliographic record access points was relatively straightforward, there was initially some uncertainty about whether to also update author names appearing in fields that are typically transcribed from the resource, such as the 245 \$c (statement of responsibility). In the absence of clear PCC guidance on recording deadnames in bibliographic records outside of authority-controlled access points, the team consulted the Trans Metadata Collective’s best practices document, which recommends that catalogers should “avoid juxtaposition between current and previous names in a public display as this will usually out someone as trans,” and suggests replacing any former names with the current name in brackets to indicate that the name was supplied, rather than transcribed.⁴¹ After discussion the team ultimately decided to follow the Trans Metadata Collective’s recommendations, and added the following sentences to the guidelines: “The brackets are used in the catalog record to indicate metadata which is normally transcribed directly from the item, but in this case has been derived by the cataloger. By keeping the names consistent there is less chance of outing a person as trans by having different names in the record, while reducing confusion for other catalogers using the record.” This was intended to add context for that decision. While the primary audience for the guidelines is catalogers, they might also be referred to by archivists working with finding aids, or others who are perhaps not as familiar with MARC cataloging.

Language describing the process for updates in VIAF (they receive updates after the Name Authority Record is edited) was also included so users did not have to email OCLC again in the future. There was also discussion about who would update metadata in the institutional repository, Digital Commons, which was made more difficult by the temporary lack of a scholarly communication librarian. Ultimately it was decided that the vision was for the metadata unit to advise Digital Commons administrators on metadata, although that decision might be revisited later.

While generally referred to as “Name Update Guidelines” the document’s full and official title is “Milner Library Metadata Name Update Guidelines.” The word “metadata” was added after discussion with the university archivist to emphasize that these guidelines do not cover updates or changes in published content such as yearbooks or articles in the campus newspaper, *The Vidette*. An additional sentence reading, “Also, these guidelines do not cover changes to published materials such as *The Vidette* or yearbooks in either digital or physical formats,” was added to further clarify that matter.

In addition, it was decided that since this was important enough to someone to request it, the Technical Services Department should make good faith efforts to update the metadata on as many platforms as possible, such as CONTENTdm or third-party platforms like Wikidata. The sheer amount of possible published scholarship made always notifying journal and book publishers impractical, and we were not certain if a publisher would accept a request for an update from a third party such as the library. It was also decided that Special Collections and the University Archives should determine when to update names in container lists for finding aids. While names from NARs in finding aids could be updated by Technical Services workers, changing names in container lists or inventories would mean that they no longer matched the name written on physical folders or boxes. As Special Collections and University Archives staff would be responsible for changing the names on the folders, it was felt it would be best to let them also determine if and when to update metadata for inventories.

Updating the MARC 245 \$c (statement of responsibility) and MARC 505 (table of contents) fields was noted as a great project for the cataloging unit, and it was decided that while CONTENTdm does not have robust authority control (it does not currently support “see” references or automatic flips) metadata remediation in controlled fields and/or free texts fields was still desirable.

Discussions with the cataloging unit coordinator were held regarding updating author Cutter numbers if a surname was changed. This would help group books together and improve browsing for patrons; however, it would also involve units outside of cataloging. The Processing Unit would need to redo the spine labels, and Access Services would need to shift the books on the shelves after they were updated. It was ultimately decided to evaluate this on a case-by-case basis depending on how many books would need to be redone, and with input from the other stakeholders.

The final text of the Milner Library Metadata Name Update Guidelines can be found in appendix 1.

Outreach

When the policy was finalized, the head of technical services described it to the library Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) committee, and requested they publicize the service. The language provided was:

If you have scholarship or creative outcomes appearing under a previous name in library platform search results, Milner Library will gladly update the metadata for those items where we can. Because our catalog displays results from a wide variety of sources (some not under our control) there may still be some items that show your previous name, but we will make updates to reflect your current name to the extent possible. If you would like to learn more please email isured@ilstu.edu.

The language was intended to be brief and understandable to a general academic but non-cataloging, non-library audience. It was also intended to convey that the library was open to updating names in metadata regardless of why a name change occurred. Name changes as a part of individuals transitioning gender have received considerable attention, but a change in marital status, a name change for safety reasons, or any other circumstance were also considered to be valid reasons for updating metadata. The library also did not feel the need to be informed of the reason for the change, and it was hoped that not requiring individuals to disclose a potentially personal reason for a name change would encourage participation.

In addition to distributing language to the IDEA committee to publicize the name update service, the team engaged in outreach to other library staff by presenting on the new name update guidelines at several library department meetings. This also presented an opportunity to solicit feedback from colleagues in other parts of the library regarding the guidelines. On October 24, 2023, the metadata librarian presented on the name update guidelines at the library Information Assets meeting. Information Assets is one of the top-level administrative divisions of Milner Library and includes University Archives, Preservation, the Digitization Center, Access Services, Special Collections, Collection Development, Copyright, Scholarly Communication, and Technical Services. The metadata librarian prepared slides for the presentation and discussed the background for the newly developed guidelines as well as its contents, including a detailed discussion of what parts of the bibliographic and authority record would be updated when a name change occurred. When the metadata librarian explained that Technical Services would be removing gender from authority records per PCC guidelines, one attendee asked for clarification on what PCC was, an indication that the presentation was perhaps too technical and assumed more knowledge about cataloging and metadata than was appropriate for a non-specialist audience. Apart from this, there were relatively few questions from the audience during the Information Assets presentation. This was likely at least in part due to the fact that attendance at the meeting was relatively low, with the audience consisting primarily of unit heads. Another possible factor is that many of the library staff with expertise in metadata and the systems being discussed had been consulted on the guidelines while they were being drafted, so they had already had an opportunity to ask questions.

On November 10, 2023, the metadata librarian presented on the name update guidelines again, this time for the library's Public Services meeting. The meeting was primarily attended by subject and instruction librarians. Though the structure of the presentation was the same, the metadata librarian modified the contents of the presentation somewhat to make it less technical by describing changes to be made to creator fields, tables of contents, and notes, rather than listing the three-digit MARC codes for these fields. The student success librarian and chair of the library IDEA committee also discussed the committee's plans for promoting the service using the language provided by the head of technical services. Feedback on the guidelines was positive, and the majority of the discussion centered around how public services librarians could best disseminate awareness of the service to faculty and students. One attendee offered feedback on the outreach language, suggesting that it could be modified to be more declarative by removing the conditional "if" clause at the beginning of the statement and instead starting with "Milner Library will update metadata . . ." However, the head of technical services, the cataloging and metadata librarian, and the metadata librarian ultimately decided to keep the conditional framing of the outreach language, since the name update process is ultimately predicated on an author having works under a previous name and the library being made aware of the need for a metadata update.

Discussion

Metadata Maintenance Across Multiple Platforms

The process of developing the Name Update Guidelines illustrates how complex the dynamics of metadata creation and maintenance can be in an academic library context. Library metadata "lives" in many different platforms, each with their own areas of coverage and norms for editing. We considered a total of four locally maintained platforms that might be affected by the policy, including Alma/Primo VE (library catalog and discovery layer), CONTENTdm (digital repository), ArchivesSpace (archival finding aids), and Digital Commons (institutional repository); in addition to these local systems, the team also considered five additional "external" systems containing cooperatively managed data, including OCLC/WorldCat, the LC Name Authority File (LCNAF), ISNI, Wikidata, and Wikipedia, making for a total of nine internal and external platforms that would potentially be impacted by the guidelines.

These platforms vary widely in how much control individual libraries have over metadata related to their institution's holdings and related authors. In the case of most of the internal systems (CONTENTdm, ArchivesSpace, Digital Commons), we have full discretion over the metadata they contain and can establish procedures for editing author information as we see fit; as with any database added to over time by multiple parties, however, the problem of maintaining consistency between past and current practices remains. Alma/Primo VE, while also a local system, presents a more complex mixture of editing considerations: while Alma is our local catalog, Illinois State University also shares its Alma instance with a regional consortium, the Consortium of Academic and Regional Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), and as a result any edits to bibliographic records for locally held items also impact any other CARLI library that has their holdings on the record in the Alma Network Zone; any edits made

only locally, without editing the OCLC record, must be coded expressly as local data to avoid being overlaid if another CARLI library downloads a new copy of the record from OCLC. The latter amounts to a strong argument for making all name-change-related edits to the bibliographic record both in Alma and in OCLC, since some of the most prominent MARC fields that contain name metadata (e.g., 100, 245 \$c) are not eligible for local extensions in Alma. Users searching Primo VE (the discovery layer deployed with Alma) may also encounter name metadata in records for journal articles, e-books, and other resources from Primo VE's Central Discovery Index (CDI), which local libraries have little to no control over.

The situation becomes even more complex in external systems where data is cooperatively managed, such as OCLC, the LCNAF, Wikidata, and Wikipedia. In these platforms, library staff can edit directly to reflect author name changes, but there is no guarantee that the changes will not be reverted by another institution or other party. In OCLC and the LCNAF, the widespread adoption of RDA as a common cataloging code places at least some guardrails on the types of changes that may take place—particularly in the case of the LCNAF, where edits/additions can only be made by members of the PCC, which as described above, has issued extensive policy statements on name changes and gender information in authority records.⁴² Wikidata and Wikipedia, however, are much more open information environments where the barriers to participation are significantly lower, and the norms around data for persons who have changed their name are less well established. While Wikidata and Wikipedia offer great potential for exposing library metadata to a wider audience and democratizing access to data more generally, libraries must acknowledge that, if they commit to maintaining data for affiliated authors (or other entities) in these platforms, they must also accept a potential loss of control over how that data is edited and used in these open data environments.

The development of the Name Update Guidelines also brought attention to the dispersed nature of metadata maintenance within our own organization, with often overlapping or ambiguous lines of responsibility. Library catalog data is maintained by Cataloging Unit and Metadata Unit staff (both part of the Technical Services department), using MARC encoding and RDA as a content standard; metadata for digital collections in our CONTENTdm repository is created by members of the Metadata Unit, using Dublin Core as an element set and a variety of local data dictionaries; archival finding aids in ArchivesSpace are maintained by staff from Special Collections or University Archives (two separate departments at Illinois State University), depending on who the custodian of the collection is. However, since all of the Name Authority Cooperative (NACO) contributors at Milner Library are in the Technical Services department, and a major component of the name update workflow is editing the author's name authority record, this led to discussions about who should update controlled personal name headings in ArchivesSpace: was it under the purview of Special Collections and Archives because it pertained to archival collections, or was it a task for the Metadata Unit as a part of authority work? Ultimately, the decision was made to have the Metadata Unit update creator and subject fields in ArchivesSpace to keep them in sync with the LCNAF, while other appearances of the author's name in the finding aid (e.g., title, inventory, biography, scope, and contents) would be left to the discretion of Archives and Special Collections staff.

Similar institutional ambiguities were revealed when it came to the workflow for updating author names in our institutional repository, Digital Commons, which is managed by the library's Scholarly Communications Team. Some felt that the Metadata Team should be charged with updating name metadata in Digital Commons, as an extension of their authority work and their focus on cross-platform discovery; others felt that the Metadata Team should play more of an advisory role in the institutional repository, rather than editing its metadata directly. Although Digital Commons, as the designated repository for scholarly and creative works by faculty and students, is the platform most likely to be impacted by author name changes, the scholarly communications librarian position (the primary steward for Digital Commons) was vacant at the time the Name Update Guidelines were being formulated, further complicating the question of departmental responsibility. This ultimately led to a larger discussion about the Metadata Team's role in the institutional repository, which historically has not been subject to the same degree of metadata oversight as some of Milner Library's other repositories. A key takeaway from all of these discussions is the importance of interdepartmental coordination in establishing coherent metadata policy: in the decentralized metadata environment that characterizes Milner Library and many other academic libraries, where library data lives in many different places and is touched by many different people, communication between stakeholders to ensure consistent outcomes across platforms is crucial.

Changing Cataloging Practices

The process of creating these guidelines also shed light on an area of uncertainty and changing practices within the cataloging community, particularly with respect to how to balance ethical considerations with the requirements of shared cataloging codes. This tension is particularly notable in descriptive metadata fields that have traditionally been transcribed directly from the resource. The idea that the name in an authorized access point may not match the form of the name used in the resource is by no means a new one; indeed, it is one of the very foundations of authority work, which requires the creation of a standardized heading to collocate all works by an author, regardless of the name or form of name used on the resource. When it comes to descriptive metadata, however, RDA is heavily informed by the International Cataloging Principles (ICP), particularly ICP 2.3 (often referred to as the "Principle of Representation"), which calls for metadata descriptions to represent a resource as it represents itself;⁴³ transcription of title page information, including the author's name in the statement of responsibility, is prescribed not only in RDA but also in Descriptive Rules for Cataloging of Rare Materials (DCRM), where it is particularly important for identification of resources that lack standardized identifiers such as ISBNs.⁴⁴ On the other hand, a growing awareness of the ethical implications of personal name metadata—particularly in the case of trans authors who could be outed without their consent by the presence of their deadname in a record—has led some catalogers and metadata professionals to question the primacy of transcription. Though the Trans Metadata Collective, as discussed above, has offered alternatives to strict transcription for trans authors' deadnames, catalogers may continue to feel constrained by current cataloging norms, particularly since cooperative cataloging organizations have yet to issue any specific guidance on deadnames in transcribed fields. As one participant in a February-March 2024 discussion on the Radical Cataloging (RADCAT) listserv

observed, “To me one of the biggest issues is how to handle transcribed deadnames in bib records. . . . People often feel like they have no option but to follow the cataloging rules (which require transcription of the information on the item) and are not sure what to do.”⁴⁵

The PCC Task Group on Gender was assigned to issue best practices and guidelines on deadnames and name changes in MARC authority and bibliographic data.⁴⁶ Discussions and questions continue with release of the guidelines still pending. The gender transition name change thread on the RADCAT listserv during February and March 2024 grew contentious with differing opinions. The following query was posed but not answered:

What do we do with PDFs? I’m thinking of ETDs here. Someone downloads it. Cites from download. We change the PDF and all the metadata in repositories and catalogs. How does someone get back to the piece? Or current print titles? If someone has the print title in hand with deadname, and cites it. We have changed not just the 1xx, or 7xx but the 245 \$c as well, how will the user get from a citation to the title with the new author? We know that titles are not always unique and get changed.⁴⁷

For many catalogers, it may feel like descriptive cataloging norms have not yet caught up to the times, leaving uncertainty about how to treat authors with respect while still adhering to the metadata standards that make cooperative cataloging possible.

Alternative Approaches: Linked Data and Identity Management

The current landscape of discovery services with the cataloger’s responsibility to provide access to millions of resources and their shared metadata from multiple sources makes quality control problematic. Author name changes are occurring in a rapidly changing environment of navigating emerging technologies, managing shared metadata, overseeing multiple schemas in different formats, and ethically applying cataloging standards and rules. Without connections and linkage to name variations, searches produce inaccurate and incomplete results, and the improper crediting of an author’s work.⁴⁸ Linked data offers a viable solution for name changes to be consistent, identifiable, and unique data across multiple platforms and systems. Linked data applications have the promise to reconcile name variation strings with global authoritative links from linked open data resources and identity management systems.⁴⁹

Since 2015, exploratory projects in linked data services for library cataloging have taken place in the form of pilots, including the Library of Congress BIBFRAME pilots and Linked Data for Production (LD4P) pilots.⁵⁰ The PCC Task Group on Identity Management in NACO undertook pilot projects with external organizations ISNI in 2017 and Wikidata in 2020 to expand community participation in the implementation of identity management principles with the creation of identifiers and authority data. Working with ISNI and Wikidata communities follows the library paradigm “in which libraries complete identity management work on behalf of individuals and organizations.”⁵¹ The goal of identity management platforms is not necessarily to record biographical information but rather to mint unique identifiers that define and disambiguate entities and their relationships. While there are fewer data

elements required to justify a name identifier, the model still places the authority to define an identity in the hands of the cataloger or someone else other than the subject. The paradigm shift from name authority control to identity management may lessen ethical and privacy concerns, but does not completely eliminate them.

ORCID and ISNI create identifiers for name entities with a focus on their relationships and their related works. However, unlike ISNI, ORCID focuses on individual researchers and allows the authors to create their own authority record and control the information about themselves. It removes catalogers as the authority on describing identities and permits authors to “self-describe their experiences to whatever extent they wish.”⁵² Authors control the privacy levels of information in a granular level in ORCID. Its goal is to disambiguate author names and is valuable for authors who have changed their names, have common names, or have used name variations when publishing. It is a widely adopted identity management platform and integrates across platforms, organizations, publisher systems, and journals. By doing so, it enables consistency across the scholarship lifecycle, starting at the manuscript submission process with authors using their ORCID. It enables systems to recognize and link publications associated with the author’s ORCID and accurately track and share a scholarly record. Authors can enter, edit, and monitor their work history, education, funding/grants history, memberships/service, and publication history.⁵³

At Illinois State University, the Graduate School encourages, but does not require, students to register an ORCID when submitting their thesis or dissertation. The number of faculty members with ORCID iDs or who know the value of ORCID iDs in managing their identity associated with their scholarship record is not known and has not been explored by the authors. ORCID may lay some groundwork for the library to give faculty, scholars, and students at the university the power to control their own name identity. ORCID has the potential to remove the cataloger’s authority in validating an author’s identity in resources and streamlining the publishing record in the future linked data landscape of automated techniques linking identifiers.

While it is promising to have authors involved in their own identity management in ORCID, the linked data environment does not work independently. Managing library data as linked data successfully requires cooperation and support beyond the library and linked data communities, including library vendors, system and platform vendors, metadata contractors, authors, researchers, and publishers.⁵⁴ The library needs to directly involve “the subjects (e.g., authors, researchers, publishers) of identity management in the process of stewarding their profiles in global identify management platforms,”⁵⁵ as an initial start for name changes to occur seamlessly, accurately and uniformly across library platforms in the future.

This suggests several avenues for further research. For example, what role do libraries play in identity management for the deceased, or others who cannot or have no desire to manage their identity in metadata? User studies can also help identify the most relevant metadata for librarians to focus their efforts on and possibly assign a lower priority to metadata that users do not find valuable in search

results. And of course, ongoing discussions and research into how to perform this work ethically and with respect to creators, especially how not to endanger creators, are absolutely vital.

Conclusion

With library catalog search results increasingly displaying metadata from sources other than MARC records, updating metadata for changed names is both an issue of providing consistent and accurate metadata as well as a moral and ethical obligation. The second principle of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics speaks directly to this when it states, “We commit to describing resources without discrimination whilst respecting the privacy and preferences of their associated agents.”⁵⁶ While this is mostly discussed in terms of trans people changing their names, it also applies to people who change their names when they get married, for safety reasons, or for any other reason. The authors are aware that this is one more thing to do when staffing is often already stretched at or beyond the breaking point, but it comes up rarely, and in any case, providing accurate metadata that respects our creator’s identities is a critical part of our work. While many authors have made the strong case for *why* metadata should be updated, we hope these guidelines will help other institutions formulate plans for how and when to perform that work, resulting in a more accurate and inclusive catalog for all.

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Appendix 1. Milner Library Metadata Name Update Guidelines

Purpose

This policy describes where and under which circumstances Milner Library will update metadata to reflect name changes for Illinois State University faculty, staff, and students. This work is necessary to ensure that we are providing our patrons with accurate metadata that reflects the correct name usage of authors and other creators and contributes to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) goals at the library and campus level.

Under What Circumstances Will Updates Be Made

Generally, metadata will be updated on request from the creator of items described by Milner Library in one or more of its various platforms. On occasion, metadata may be updated on the request of third parties if there is sufficient evidence that the name has changed (name changes made to the faculty web page, ORCID, the item in question itself, etc.).

Where Will Changes Be Made

These processes draw on the findings and recommendations of *Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources*.¹

When notified Milner Library will update the name metadata on the following platforms to the best of their ability:

- The Name Authority Record will be updated by Technical Services personnel trained in authority work, including removing existing references to gender identity per PCC policy.² The inclusion of a 400 field with the former name will automatically convert the former name to the current name in 100 and 700 fields in English language OCLC MARC records.
- In 245 |c, 500, 505, and other free text fields in MARC records the Cataloging Unit will update the name. If the name has also been changed in the item itself (probably a PDF or other electronic resource) the text will be changed to reflect the current name. If the text in the item has not been changed the former name will be replaced with the current name in square brackets, such as [Current Name]. The brackets are used in the catalog record to indicate metadata which is normally transcribed directly from the item, but in this case has been derived by the cataloger. By keeping the names consistent there is less chance of outing a person as trans by having different names in the record, while reducing confusion for other catalogers using the record.

This will be done in OCLC Connexion and Alma records until our Alma records are synced automatically with Connexion records.

- OCLC receives updates on Name Authority Records from Library of Congress and the name will be updated in Virtual International Authority File (VIAF) after the NAR is changed.
- International Standard Name Identifier (ISNI.org) will be notified of the change by the person updating the NAR when that work is done.

- Milner Library’s Cataloging Unit will update the name in Wikidata and Wikipedia articles; however, changes will not be actively monitored and may be reverted by other editors.
- The Metadata Unit will advise Digital Commons administrators on updates to name metadata in that platform. Guidelines for name changes to published student documents in Digital Commons are being developed with the Graduate School.
- The Metadata Unit will update the metadata in CONTENTdm. Where metadata is supplied (such as name access points and free-text description fields) it will be updated to the current name, and where it is transcribed from the item (such as a statement of responsibility) it will be updated and placed in square brackets (for example: [Current Name]).
- The Metadata Unit will update the metadata in the Special Collections and Archives instances of ArchivesSpace for the Creator and Subject sections to maintain consistency with the updated NAR. Changes to the biography, title, summary, inventory of materials, and other areas of the finding aid will be made at the discretion of the Special Collections or Archives staff on a case-by-case basis.
- The Cataloging Unit and Binding/Processing Units (in consultation with Access Services who will need to reshelve volumes) may recutter previous call numbers to the current name. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Other Updates

It is beyond the capacity of Milner Library to contact journals, publishers, and other third parties to update names in versions of record for articles, books, etc. Also, these guidelines do not cover changes to published materials such as *The Vidette* or yearbooks in either digital or physical formats. We may advise to the best of our ability on how to proceed on a case-by-case basis.

Appendix Notes

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