

MARC for Special Collections (MASC) Discussion Group draft minutes

Midwinter Meeting, Boston
Sunday, January 17, 2010
Sheraton Boston, Back Bay B
10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Attendees: Annie Copeland, Ellen Ellickson, Eduardo Tenenbaum, Ann Myers, Jennifer Schaffner, Elizabeth Johnson, Joe Springer, John Overholt, Sarah Fisher, Jennifer MacDonald, Kate Moriarty, Richard Noble, Tom Bolze, E.C. Schroeder, Vernica Downey, Francis Lapka, Jane Carpenter, Elizabeth Robinson, Phyllis Payne, Helice Koffler, Rebecca Henning, Rebecca McCallum, Ray Schmidt, Stephen Skuce, Jane Gillis, Deborah J. Leslie, Melissa Conway, Jill Vassilakos-Long, Martha Lawler, Jeff Barton, Manon Theroux, James Ascher, Nina Schneider

1). Welcome and introductions.

2.) Topics discussed:

A). OCLC issues.

Given the new functionality available in OCLC to improve records, are catalogers working differently --for example, routinely adding genre/form terms to master records?

Some participants said they search the OCLC database for a suitable record to enhance using DCRM(B) cataloging rules and/or they add genre terms and notes to AACR2 records, others said they upgrade their records only in their local database. The concern that other catalogers could delete the information in enhanced records in OCLC was mentioned as was the belief that public services librarians would prefer less elaborate records.

Annie Copland reported that on behalf of the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee she had written to OCLC to inquire about the possibility of OCLC allowing duplicate records for the same item, one record cataloged according to AACR2 and another according to DCRM: permissible duplicates. OCLC responded that rather than allowing permissible duplicates, they might prefer having the DCRM record, as the one containing the most information, be the master record. OCLC wondered how libraries would react to this change. A show of hands of MASC participants was called for and a large majority indicated their preference for the DCRM record being the master record. Some attendees asked to have an OCLC representative at a future MASC meeting to discuss master records, duplicate records and proliferation of records in the database.

B). Cataloging changes in the new economic environment.

Have the tough economic times resulted in administrative directives to produce leaner and less elaborate catalog records? To produce more collection-level records?

A question for the participants began the discussion: had their institutional level of support for attending conferences changed in the last year? A show of hands revealed that over half the group had had no change in their funding, although it was mentioned that funding was now less readily approved. Changes in cataloging as a result of tough times that were cited included the reprioritizing of backlogs and the creation of collection-level records in OCLC that are linked to finding aids listing titles within the collection. In connection with the last practice, it was noted that finding aids are not designed for printed materials and that item-level records with in-depth notes are essential for managing acquisitions. On the subject of acquisitions, it was mentioned that collecting modern books results in cheaper and faster cataloging.

4). Announcements.

Ann Meyers reported on a survey she and Melissa Hubbard had made of rare book catalogers and their institutions' response to the hidden collections problem. Of the 97 responses, 55% considered changing cataloging policy or practices and 51% actually implemented changes. Most changes were changes in policy, doing limited-term projects to address part of the backlog, and reallocating resources to cataloging. Of the respondents, 56% reported that they created no new rare book cataloging positions for these effort. Only 27% applied for grant funding; of those who did, 58% were successful. More survey results will be forthcoming.

Minutes by MASC co-convenors Annie Copeland and Ellen Ellickson