

Cataloging Reorganization Report

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Cataloging Center

In 1990 the libraries belonging to the LTLS shared automation project agreed to begin storing full MARC records in the online catalog. During the next 2 years a committee of member libraries reviewed the best method of acquiring MARC records and the best method for having libraries contribute MARC records. At that time OCLC was selected as the sole source for MARC records and LTLS established criteria for libraries that wished to be designated as Cataloging Centers. As a result of those two base policies LTLS established a Cataloging Center beginning in 1992 for those libraries that did not qualify as a Cataloging Center. It was designed from the beginning to be a shared cost program. LTLS has continued to operate the center since its inception – more than 15 years.

One of the most important agreements between LTLS and the libraries at the onset of the Cataloging Center (CC) was that LTLS would operate the center with emphasis on quick turn-around-time (TAT) for items and items would be prioritized on a first-received, first-out basis by LTLS. This TAT agreement has been in place with little or no review or discussion about it from the beginning. Over the past several years the TAT has become longer and longer and the libraries have voiced concern but continued to be supportive of the CC. However, because of the long TAT several things happened. Libraries would send things in as rush that normally would not be considered rush and those items would be cataloged quickly (for example one library sent all DVD's in as rush) and thus push older materials even longer behind. Seasonal items (such as Thanksgiving items) would be sorted out and cataloged quickly so that they were back to the library prior to the holiday. Again this caused many items to be at LTLS even longer. Finally because of the very long TAT many items were in LINC prior to LTLS getting to the items so that a lot of items were returned to the libraries for use and could have been in use for several weeks. At one time the returns were at a high of 30% of all items that were cataloged by the CC. The most egregious overdue items were the items that required original cataloging. Many of the items were at the CC for over a year. Unfortunately many of the items that were sorted as needing original cataloging were in OCLC by the time the cataloger got to them and they could have been in the libraries and being used for quite some time.

The backlog and the slow TAT developed over a period of years. Among the causes were no backup for cataloging staff over vacations and sick leave. The center was staffed for everyone being present and did not take into account these important staff benefits. Staff turnover also accounted for some of the backlog – again no backup was in place to support the operation when there were staffing changes. The receiving and returning of cataloging items began to take up more and more time as new libraries came online and more sorting and

counting needed to be done, thus taking away from staff time for actual cataloging. Also the ebb and flow of new libraries joining LINC and the retrospective conversion time also contributed to many of the problems. Finally the individual differences in staff productivity were notable. Average monthly numbers for full time employees ranged to a high of over 800 items per month to a low of under 250. Even taking into consideration the type of material, this inequality was not acceptable. All of these factors pointed to the need for a total review of the CC operation.

A total review of the Cataloging operations was part of the LTLS FY 2007 LTLS Annual Plan. The review started in October 2006 and was completed by the middle of May 2007. The review included more frequent meetings of staff, a one-on-one review of procedures by an internal staff member with each member of the cataloging team, a review of those procedures by the staff member, one-on-one meetings with each team member with the Director, the Director becoming the interim head of the Cataloging operation and assigning the CC head to concentrate on copy cataloging to eliminate the backlog, a contract with the LTLS Cataloging Maintenance Center to do all the original cataloging, and weekly evaluation of the levels of cataloging being completed (original, copy, copy plus, enhanced). The final part of the review was to eliminate the backlog by the end of December or early in calendar year 2007. In early October the original cataloging backlog was over one year. By the end of December the original cataloging was up-to-date and the backlog was eliminated. In early October the copy cataloging backlog was almost 2 months. By the end of December it was down to a month and by the end of January it was less than 2 weeks. Subsequent to that the copy cataloging has been averaging between 10 and 14 days which is much better but still not the 3-day TAT as was originally promised. The libraries are, however, very complimentary. The change in staffing responsibilities has remained in place during this entire time of review.

Cataloging Maintenance Center

In October 2000 LTLS was selected as one of two Cataloging Maintenance Centers (CMC) for the state of Illinois. The Illinois State Library provided funding for the centers. The original responsibility for the CMCs was to process catalog records that were not matched with LLSAPs' loaded records into OCLC via batchload. Subsequent to that time the CMCs were expanded to 3 centers. CMCs are assigned to work on new materials that do not load into OCLC during quarterly batchloads and also offer original cataloging to members of shared automation systems on a contractual basis. This CMC role enabled LTLS to contract with the CMC to eliminate the backlog in original cataloging.

When the review of the LTLS CC began it was not part of the plan to review the CMC. However, in reviewing the CC it became obvious that looking at all operations and what was being done was essential. The CMC is housed at LTLS and the CMC staff are members of the LTLS staff, so it is essential that all staff be treated in the same manner and that work responsibilities match position

descriptions. The CMC does not have the same productivity TAT responsibility as the CC, except in the area of contract cataloging. The CMC's guarantee TAT for original and copy cataloging is 2 weeks. Because of the positive results from the original cataloging of new items that came to the CC, LTLS began to contract out all the retrospective conversion copy and original cataloging to the CMC. This decision was made following a review of other options including hiring a full time cataloger and contracting with OCLC for all the retroconversion. This solution was more cost effective and much more efficient for the libraries. As a result of the CMC's involvement with retroconversion the backlog for these items has been reduced by more than a month. Libraries using this service are also very happy with the results.

Weed and Feed

In 2005 LTLS was awarded a project to help libraries that received "Weed and Feed" grants and "Back to Books" grants to provide original cataloging. There were many libraries that fell into that category. In November 2005 a full time cataloger was hired. This cataloger began working on items from LTLS libraries that had received those grants. Contacts were made with all the library system cataloging personnel to spread the word and also direct mailings. The staff member resigned in June 2006 and the position was not filled. In a report to the Illinois State Library the Director suggested that the need for the project did not justify continuing.

Observations and Issues

Staffing Related

- Staff is dedicated to the work
- Vacation and sick time slows the operation
- Lots of time taken from cataloging by support staff in receiving and shipping cataloging materials
- Upgrading items in LINC but not in OCLC
- Departmental communication is not productive
- CC has 1.32 FTE professional catalogers
- CC has 2.04 FTE copy catalogers
- CMC has 1 FTE professional cataloger
- CMC has .5 FTE copy cataloger
- Total Staff for CC and CMC is 2.32 FTE Professional Catalogers; 2.54 Copy Catalogers

Copy Cataloging

- Difference in level of productivity of staff
- Prompt Cat is an advantage to libraries
- Procedures for PromptCat
- Lessons Learned from PromptCat Cataloging are not transferred to ongoing copy cataloging
- Copy Cataloging was increased

Original Cataloging

- CMC doing less than 500 items per year on average

- CC doing 1000 or less original items per year on average

Types of Materials

- Donated materials of uncertain quality as well as purchased materials are sent to CC
- Non-published materials such as scrapbooks, old game score books, posters, locally developed kits, etc. are sent to the CC
- Archival or local materials that are not published are sent to the CC for cataloging

Funding

- CC funding is based on % of materials budget with no consideration for large numbers of donated or local non-published items

Reorganization

Staff Reorganization Changes

- CC and CMC will be managed by 1 FTE professional cataloger
- CC will have an additional .32 FTE professional cataloger
- CC and CMC together will have a total of 1.32 FTE professional catalogers, a reduction of 1 FTE professional cataloger
- CC will have 2.81 FTE copy catalogers, an increase in .77 FTE
- CMC will have 1 FTE copy catalogers, an increase of .5 FTE
- Total Staff for CC and CMC will be 1.32 FTE professional catalogers and 3.81 FTE copy catalogers

Other Changes

- Develop a plan for LTLS role in Digitized Services in accordance with the FY 2008 Annual Plan
- Increase training for Cataloging Staff
- Develop criteria for items that are eligible to be sent to the CC within the funding formula framework
- Develop a pricing structure for non-published items sent to the CC
- Reduce TAT for new items in CC to no more than 3 working days
- Determine staffing options for specialized collection cataloging (i.e. digitized content, special collections, archival materials etc.)
- CC will contract with CMC for staff assistance during extended vacation and sick leave
- Review changes in 6 months to determine outcome