ALCTS Virtual Interest Group Week: Cataloging Norm Interest Group session QAs

Tuesday, June 9, 2020 2-3pm CDT / 3-4pm EDT / 12-1pm PDT

Q1: Hi Bela, is barcode data (from spreadsheet in the first project) extracted from Alma, or manually scanned?

A1: The first project (JSTOR Discovery Ebooks) involved an electronic collection with over 40,000 electronic portfolios. Portfolios do not have barcodes because they are not physical items. To do a batch job on a set of portfolios in ExLibris Alma Portfolio IDs have to be extracted. The steps of doing this as follows:

In the Electronic Collection under Edit Service go to portfolios.

1. Import the Excel of the portfolios.
2. The Excel sheet will display the mms ids for the portfolios. However we want to have a set of portfolio ids to run a batch job and so will have to do this by extracting them in Alma Analytics
3. In Alma Analytics extract pid(s), i.e. portfolio ids by the mms ids
4. Now with the list of pids in ExLibris Alma, do the job on the portfolios.

[Answered by Bela Gupta bgupta@umassd.edu]

Q2: Can you use a NEAR parameter in the advanced search to get the variety of ways catalogers enter something akin to "English translated into Spanish?"

A2: I'm not sure that using the NEAR operator will get you anything. For example, take the following fragment of a 546 Language Note:"Dialog in French and English; Subtitles in Spanish". In this fragment, "English" is actually closer to "Subtitles" than it is to "Dialog".

I don't think the NEAR operator is used much in public-facing OPACs anymore. My guess is that the same functionality has been taken over by results ranking. That is, records with the user search terms "closer together" will get a higher ranking.

But the real problem with searching free text is that the wording can change from record to record. You might have "Dialog in English and Spanish" in one record, and "Dialog in English, dubbed in Spanish" in another record.

If the 546 Language Note was specifically searchable, an individual library could -- with a lot of work -- standardize the note's wording, which would (I think) help get patrons what they are looking for.

[Answered by Graeme Williams carryonwilliams@gmail.com]