Report of the ALCTS CCS Copy Cataloging Interest Group

ALA Midwinter Conference, January 2010

Saturday, Jan. 16, 2010, 10:30-12:00 noon, Boston Convention Center

Tatiana Barr, Chair

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Considering the weather, the logistics of getting to the new Boston Convention Center, and U.S. economics, the meeting had a good turn out of about about 75 people. Our first discussant was **Angela Kinney**, Chief, African, Latin American & Western European Division, Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate, Library of Congress, with two topics: one, “Copy Cataloging in the Aftermath of the Reorganization of the Acquisitions & Bibliographic Access Directorate at the Library of Congress” and, two, an update on the “R2 Consulting LLC Report: Current Approaches to the Creation and Distribution of MARC Records in US and Canadian Libraries: Summary and Perspectives?” which had appeared earlier in the year and was very much on people’s minds. And then in an attempt to encourage new librarians who show an interest in cataloging and in participating in ALCTS and ALA, to shine the spotlight on a format other than books and look at copy cataloging training issues, we invited two MLS students with an interesting map copy cataloging project: **Ava Iuliano**, Graduate Assistant, Reference/Special Collections, University of South Florida Tampa Library and graduate student at the University of South Florida School of Library & Information Science and **Darla Asher**, also from USF School of Library & Information Science. Their topic was “Copy-Cataloging: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Map”. Ava Iuliano was the only one able to attend, and presented a Power Point explaining their project, their perspective from their experiences of two graduate students in Library and Information Science who in their field work created map copy-cataloging tutorials to teach themselves and other students how to perform copy cataloging of maps and the various issues surrounding learning and training a new, perhaps daunting, format. The presentation sought to illuminate some of the pitfalls and challenges of map copy-cataloging for those with no prior experience in cataloging and no background in geography.

Ms. Kinney based her report on copy cataloging at LC on the following text which we offer in its entirety because of its detail:

ABA Reorganization: Initial Successes

The Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate had a successful initial year under the new organizational structure that was implemented in October 2008. The new structure streamlines workflows, deploys staff with unusual language skills more effectively, and fully merges acquisitions and cataloging functions, based on the regional origin of materials selected for addition to the Library’s collections—more than 2.5 million items each year. Approximately 600 ABA staff members, formerly working in 14 divisions, are now assigned to nine new divisions. Additionally, approximately twenty staff who catalog music and sound recordings were reassigned from the ABA Directorate to the Music Division, Collections and Services Directorate.

One of the goals of the ABA reorganization is to make more effective use of pre-existing bibliographic data, both in the form of traditional cataloging copy found in OCLC (or other databases) and in the form of data provided directly by publishers. The directorate anticipates that, within a few years, copy cataloging will account for one-third of all LC cataloging of materials published in the U.S. This would be a large increase from the current rate of 23 percent. Expanding copy cataloging is also an important component of our individual development program for technicians, which was instituted in summer 2008.

Copy Cataloging Production

In fiscal 2009 (October 2008 through September 2009), the ABA Directorate produced 56,308 copy cataloging records, a decrease of 21.5 percent from the 71,790 records copy-cataloged in fiscal 2008. The 56,308 copy cataloging records represented 23 percent of ABA’s bibliographic record production for the year, the same percentage as in fiscal 2008.

An additional 4,127 copy cataloging records were completed by the music and sound recording cataloging staff who now are part of the Music Division.

Changes in Copy Cataloging Workflows

As a result of the 2008 ABA Directorate reorganization, the former Copy Cataloging Pilot Team was dispersed and its members were reassigned to the new production divisions. Additional technicians throughout ABA have also begun to perform copy cataloging. They copy-catalog the materials that are received in their divisions; it is therefore not necessary to move materials to a separate team work area. The technicians are responsible for validation and verification of the descriptive and subject aspects of the cataloging record as well as for shelflisting. Their cataloging product receives either Encoding Level 4 or Encoding Level 7. The Policy and Standards Division provides support for necessary authority work, primarily new Library of Congress Subject Headings when needed.

The ABA Directorate continues to have technicians produce copy cataloging of serials, as it has done since 2005.

The African, Latin American, and Western European Division now creates minimal-level cataloging for materials in lesser-known languages from Africa, particularly Nigeria. The provision of a separate record for each title offers users significantly better access than did the former practice of collection-level cataloging for this material. Technicians perform both copy cataloging and MLC.

The six Library of Congress overseas offices administered by ABA in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Cairo, Egypt; New Delhi, India; Jakarta, Indonesia; Nairobi, Kenya; and Islamabad, Pakistan, also produce copy cataloging now that they are able to input and edit records directly in the LC integrated library system, Voyager. In fiscal 2009, the six offices copy-cataloged a total of 6,020 items. Interestingly, more than half those records, or 3,197, were produced in the Cairo Office.

Angela Kinney then summarized the report commissioned by LC on “Current Approaches to the Creation and Distribution of MARC Records in US and Canadian Libraries: Summary and Perspectives?” The Library of Congress is only beginning to consider the suggestions put forth in this report. In the discussion, Ms. Kinney emphasized that the report is not seen as a list of recommendations but suggestions as to how the Library of Congress should view its role in the national production of MARC records, and that the report brought home again the fact that the Library of Congress is unfortunately not a real ‘national’ library. One member of the audience focused on the report’s rather negative impression created of the cataloger community as a whole, in sum saying that many of the additional kinds of work catalogers are called upon to do have been a way of enhancing catalogers’ professional status and to take those away in the interests of doing more cataloging per se was a way of further “disenfranchising an already disenfranchised profession” and would be step backwards. Ms. Kinney did say in response to another inquiry that perhaps LC might look into changing the 1901 law that limited the amount of returns LC could get on its product. Everyone agreed that the Library of Congress still plays an important role for libraries of all kinds and sizes and that its service to the community is still extremely important and will continue to do so, because LC records are still viewed as the best.

Ava Iuliano’s report was on an interesting cooperative project between the University of South Florida’s Tampa Library and the South Florida School of Library & Information Science. The University of South Florida Tampa Library was seeking membership in ARL and focusing on building its unique collections. The Karst Collection is a map collection of geological maps which supports the Karst Research Project. Ms. Iuliano and Ms. Asher both enjoyed their cataloging classes but realized that they would not have any real hands on experience before they graduated, and so proposed, as part of their field work, to create a tutorial for map cataloging, and working with professional catalogers at the USF library, train students in a class setting on how to do map copy cataloging. She demonstrated some of the slides which were used to explain, with pop ups, the various fixed (with an introduction to codes) and variable fields of a MARC record, with instructions as to what to look for on the map itself and some guidance in very simple, un-technical language, regarding where to look for these elements, what they might expect from other catalogers’ interpretation, etc. Students were expected to review the tutorial before class and cataloging began. They were taught to search in OCLC Connexion for copy, and how to evaluate differences in records and identify information on the map itself. Students were given a general introduction on what it meant to be a geographer, some specialized vocabulary, concepts, and resources. The discussion at the end and the questions Ms. Iuliano answered after the session could not possibly touch on all the facets of the project. Most were about workflow. Although one question brought out the surprising statistic that they were able to catalog 300 maps each semester in this fashion, and that it was hoped the cooperation would continue as one means to get some more cataloging accomplished. Ms. Iuliano said that they would be working with the teaching staff to make the tutorials available on line sometime after ALA. We are encouraging her to write up the project, in conjunction with staff and professors at USF, for inclusion in a publication like TSQ, as a viable idea for getting more cataloging done in these straightened times. One thing is apparent, cataloging is thriving at USF.