

Coordinated Cataloging of Common SUL Electronic Resources

CAGER report to TSPC

November 2002

Charge

Investigate the possibility of sharing responsibility for cataloging, authority, and access provision (URL links and maintenance) among the SUL Libraries for commonly held electronic resources. Practical means of sharing work that can be immediately implemented should be considered and recommended to reduce duplication and build a system of trust among SUL Libraries. Report in the form of a white paper on the benefits and difficulties, costs and savings, system and staff requirements of a coordinated approach that can be planned on with the Aleph implementation.

Prefatory comments

The Committee has tried to supply several possibilities (scenarios) that might accomplish the desired reduction of duplication. Each is accompanied by a list of benefits and difficulties. The Committee lacked the data and time to provide costs and savings in terms of actual dollars. The same is true for system and staff requirements, though implications of system and staff required are often included as a benefit or difficulty.

A few factors that kept surfacing in the discussions of the CAGER Committee should be described up-front:

- 1) Much of the following discussion assumes the existence of a separate bibliographic record for electronic resources at each institution. This is not the case at all SUL institutions. As electronic resources became available, many institutions, that already owned print versions, simply added links (and sometimes copy statements) to their existing print version records and did not create a second bibliographic record to specifically describe the electronic version.
- 2) Electronic versions of monographic resources (and collections of monographic resources) are more likely to be consistent from institution to institution (e.g., netLibrary). Electronic versions of journals and other serial publications are more complicated. The Committee was unable to think of a single subscription group that is:
 - a) Accessible to students and researchers at all SUL's.
 - b) Includes access to the same list of titles within that subscription group.
 - c) Allows access to the same volumes/years for each title.

This fact severely compromises the ability to apply any proposal for sharing cataloging effort.

- 3) In any discussion of authority control for electronic resources, it should be realized that authority control is most efficient when it operates from the standpoint of

the heading—not the set of bibliographic records. It would be of greater benefit if authority control were exercised once over all the records in a shared group of bibliographic records, or if authority control and its attendant corrections were performed before they are loaded. For authority control to work on a state-wide level, a mechanism would have to be worked out to coordinate that control on a shared database in which every institution is not likely to make exactly the same decisions. The important point being that authority control works most efficiently on headings across sets of bibliographic records—not on headings within individual databases of groups of titles for which the responsibility of authority maintenance has been assigned to a particular institution.

4) The impending migration from Notis to Aleph, in phases over a 3-year period, substantially complicates the way in which any proposed plan for sharing effort in the cataloging and authority maintenance of electronic resources might work. A proposal must first take into consideration whether any cooperative/shared group of records would be maintained in Notis only, or both Notis and Aleph.

SCENARIO 1

Create a shared database of bibliographic records that could be included with each SUL's institutional searches (ala Florida Heritage Collection)

Benefits

1. There would be only one bibliographic record to be maintained. One place to record title changes, URL changes, and changes in coverage.
2. Individual groups of e-journal subscription groups or database families could be assigned to individual institutions to be responsible for keeping up with changes and updates (including added and deleted titles)
3. SUL's could assume shared responsibility for authority control in this database.

Difficulties

1. For a subscription group or database family to be eligible for this treatment, it would have to:
 - a. be subscribed to by all SUL's
 - b. be accessible by the same URL at all SUL's
 - c. have identical volume coverage at all SUL's
 - d. include the same inventory of titles at all SUL's
2. As SUL's migrate to Aleph, the items in this database would become unavailable to them, or else the database would have to migrate and co-exist in both NOTIS and Aleph.
3. The many records already created in institutional catalogs would appear as duplicates in institutional searches.
4. It is unlikely this arrangement would transfer well, if at all, into Aleph.

SCENARIO 2

Rely on a shared database of information that would be accessed through a different searching mechanism (MetaLib/SFX). Defer any other changes until those systems are operational.

Benefits

1. Libraries would not have to maintain records for titles in subscription groups or database families covered by the “knowledge base” of MetaLib/SFX; FCLA will be subscribing to monthly updates of those knowledge bases.
2. Only titles to which an SUL has access would be displayed in their searches.
3. Varying coverage of e-journals by different SUL’s can be reflected by MetaLib/SFX
4. No need for authority control in MetaLib—a completely different type of database than an OPAC.
5. Can be accessed from an SUL’s home catalog (either NOTIS or Aleph)
6. A title need not be cataloged in an SUL’s home catalog to be accessible—MetaLib/SFX can find a title in an SUL’s home catalog, if necessary.
7. Can be used by all SUL’s regardless of whether they’ve migrated to Aleph, or are still using Notis.

Difficulties

1. Individual titles would not appear in SUL OPAC’s. Users would have to know to access this alternate finding tool.
2. Different institutions may use different URL’s
3. A title not cataloged in an SUL’s home catalog would not be integrated with other resources in a home catalog search.
4. This committee lacks sufficient understanding of how MetaLib works to fully outline difficulties and benefits.

SCENARIO 3

Create a “mother” database of bibliographic records from which institutions could derive copies for their individual catalogs.

Benefits

1. To facilitate extraction (deriving) of all records for a particular e-journal subscription group, they could be identified with ticklers (or OCLC export via CatME).
2. Institutions could assume responsibility for maintenance of the records in a particular e-journal subscription group or database family in this “mother” database.
3. Each institution could enter a unique URL (if necessary)
4. Each institution could enter their own specific volume coverage.

Difficulties

1. Once derived from the “mother” database, institutional copies of these records would require individual maintenance. Changes to the “mother” record would have to be copied into each derived copy.

2. Communicating the need for corrections and changes to each institution that had derived the record would be very cumbersome and time consuming.
3. Some SUL would have to create the “mother” database, and populate it with bibliographic records.
4. An additional step will be required for SUL’s symbols to be “set” to bibliographic records in OCLC. This is necessary for patrons and public service librarians to see (via FirstSearch) that an SUL owns a resource.
5. UF (as a CONSER participant) is still responsible for the maintenance of bibliographic records in OCLC.

SCENARIO 4

Develop a “super-logon” (depending on the architecture of Aleph) that would allow some catalogers to correct the records of other institutions.

Benefits

1. Catalogers from individual SUL’s could be assigned responsibility for maintaining the records for a particular e-journal subscription group or database family not only for themselves, but for other SUL’s as well.
2. Staff with this assigned responsibility would become “experts” on the resource group, and develop a particular rapport with the vendor.

Difficulties

1. It may not be wise for an SUL cataloger to alter bibliographic records at another SUL. Doesn’t allow for SUL specific “boiler-plates”. A cataloger from one SUL may not realize the significance of a notation or practice at another SUL, and unknowingly remove significant data.
2. SUL catalogers may find it to be an unmanageable burden correcting all the records in LUIS for a particular group of titles.
3. May compromise security of the OPAC database.
4. Despite the existence of this Committee, and its purpose of promulgating guidelines for cataloging, each SUL has chosen different means (based on their unique situation and needs) to show the existence of electronic resources in their OPAC’s.

SCENARIO 5

Maintain the status quo.

Benefits

1. SUL’s could benefit from the outfall of efforts at other levels to normalize cataloging for electronic resources.
2. Allows lead-time to become familiar with the functioning of Aleph, and its impact on procedures and services.

Difficulties

1. The duplication of effort in cataloging and authority control would continue at

all SUL's.

2. Architecture and workflows may be harder to change under migration to Aleph is completed.

SCENARIO 6

Create a notification system by which an SUL could notify other SUL's about necessary changes in bibliographic records. This might take the form of a Webpage "bulletin board" to which staff from each institution could post changes, etc. and on which those postings could reside until all had read and processed the change.

Benefits

1. Individual SUL's could assume responsibility for notifying other SUL's of changes, additions, and deletions within a particular subscription group of database family.
2. No single SUL would be responsible for changing multiple copies of the same record in multiple SUL databases.

Difficulties

1. Each SUL would have to keep up with the notifications.
2. Multiple records would have to be corrected, continuing the current duplication of effort by catalogers.
3. There is always the possibility of missing or losing notifications.

SCENARIO 7

Create a database similar to the Database Locator for e-journals (a sort of "E-journal Locator")

Benefits

1. There would be only one bibliographic record for each title.
2. Authority maintenance would not be so critical since it would not interface with the OPAC.
3. Individual copy statements could be formulated for each institution—with their specific coverage indicated.
4. Individual SUL's could still attach links to the electronic version on their own records for print.

Difficulties

1. Individual e-journal titles would not appear in SUL OPAC's. Users would have to know to access this alternate finding tool (just as they now do for many of the databases)
2. SUL's with larger print collections would have greater opportunity to alert their users of electronic availability.