

Technical Services Planning Committee Meeting
November 7, 2005
Authorities Subcommittee Report
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At the January 7 TSPC meeting our report included a "Summary of discussion of UF authority control staff with UNF catalogers: November 8, 2004" written by Gerald Langford. The Subcommittee asked FCLA to use this summary and prioritized list of work to be done and problems to be resolved as a starting point for helping the SULs with authority control in Aleph. The Subcommittee continues to use this Summary and will be getting a progress report on it from FCLA at our meeting to be held Thursday, Nov. 10.

One issue raised in the Summary and discussed on our listserv was the problem caused by authority records for juvenile headings in LCA10, the Library of Congress shared authority resource file in Aleph. The Subcommittee voted to ask FCLA to block any further linking of LC bibliographic headings to juvenile authorities already in LCA10. This blocking allowed libraries already using Aleph to remove the bad linking; will allow migrating libraries to avoid the bad links; and will cut down significantly on future clean-up by creating fewer situations in which juvenile authorities in LCA10 need to be delinked.

The crux of the problem with the way Aleph handles authority headings is that the full MARC tag and the thesaurus for subject headings are not taken into account. This results in what Aleph calls ambiguous headings. An ambiguous heading is any normalized 1xx or 4xx heading that occurs in multiple records. A term such as "Metastasis" that occurs as both a 150 and a 130 is an ambiguous heading. A term such as "A.L.A." that occurs as a 4xx in multiple records is ambiguous as well. It is our understanding that in Aleph version 18, the full MARC tags will be taken into consideration; however, the coding as to whether a heading is juvenile, MeSH or LC will still not be considered.

Due to Aleph authority control problems, the University of Florida investigated outsourcing authority control processing with three vendors and shared the cost estimates with the Subcommittee. The topic of outsourcing authority control work will be discussed further at our meeting Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Subcommittee has not forgotten the charge from TSPC to look for ways to share or centralize at least some aspects of authority control. This has been accomplished in a small way thanks to Gerald Langford at UF and Angela Randtke at UNF who are handling clean-up after each FCLA load into the central LCA10 LC subject heading file.

The Subcommittee has recently updated its webpage list of members. We will be able to report more fully on substantive issues after our meeting on Nov. 10.