

# Technical Services Planning Committee Authority Committee Report

**September 1996**

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The Committee was charged June 3, 1996 to work on the following tasks to be accomplished during the 1996/97 fiscal year and to report to the Technical Services Planning Committee by September 30, 1996. The report will address the three tasks, make some comments on authority activities, and suggest some further review and analysis for this fiscal year.

## Task 1.

To examine the various ways SUS libraries are handling authority control issues, and develop an inventory of procedures being followed. This inventory can be broad in nature, i.e. in house, vendor supplied, etc.

Members of the committee were very forthcoming in responding to a survey developed to collect this information. Nine of the ten surveys were returned. A composite survey was posted to TS-PLAN July 20, 1996. The survey was a way to collect information on what FCLA authority products were being used, how members felt about the automatic derivation/claiming development programming that was very highly ranked two years ago, and to assess what experience anyone might have had with vendor authority services. By the way, automatic derivation/claiming is now an Active programming task at FCLA and everyone recognizes it as a cooperative agreement that is mutually beneficial to all the SUS libraries. Several institutions also posted their comments to TS-PLAN.

Nancy Williams posted an inventory of Vendor and FCLA Authority Services to TS-PLAN July 5, 1996. These postings are available in the TS-PLAN Archives.

Automatic derivation and claiming running state-wide by FCLA was strongly desired. Many commented that this would free staff time to tackle database cleanup that has not yet been scheduled. The survey did collect information on staff time now devoted to authority work. These figures did not include interactive heading/authority verification involved in day-to-day cataloging, but did include staff time devoted to deriving authority records into LUIS, dealing with the authority records that have changed in the last week and are reported (these changed authorities can affect bibliographic records from AAA0001 up to the latest record input or loaded), working with the monthly New Headings lists to identify authorities to derive into LUIS and to correct identified typos or incorrect headings, and review

split heading files and other problems reported through the Error Detection reports.

Staff time devoted to authority activity for the nine respondents follow. Size of bibliographic files range from 48,307 to 1,682,929 records.

Library A---1.25 FTE	Library D---.07 FTE	Library G---2.45 FTE
Library B---2.4 FTE	Library E---.35 FTE	Library H---1.43 FTE
Library C---1.5 FTE	Library F---.27 FTE	Library I---1.2 FTE

Just under 11 FTEs are devoted to authority activity from these institutions and probably 50-60% FTEs are paraprofessional and 40-50% are professional. The three institutions and one satellite not included have the following bibliographic files as of 7/2/96 (370,891--645,653--81,272 or 20% of the total SUS file). An estimate would give the SUS 13 FTEs devoted to authority control.

Some suggestions were made on the survey that went beyond the inventory and these can be part of further review and analysis work for this coming fiscal year.

#### Task 2.

To explore options for cooperative agreements among the SUS libraries using commercial authority products, or with commercial vendors who supply authority services.

#### Task 3.

To determine how such agreements can be cost effective and mutually beneficial to the SUS libraries.

Since these two tasks are so intertwined they will be addressed together. The survey showed the majority had not considered outsourcing authority work; we wondered why we were being asked to do so when we have the full LTLC resource file and automatic derivation/claiming had been designated as a high priority for FCLA development for at least two years. We already have numerous authority products and processes generated as a foundation for an efficient statewide cooperative authority workflow. Another concern was the loss of access to the bibliographic records while they were being processed by an outside vendor. One committee member had sent a file of 36,000 records to a vendor for authority processing recently and found the vendor did not catch some headings that the computer should have caught and flipped with the 4xx field. The overall sense was that we probably could accomplish the same processing more cheaply with greater quality control through FCLA.

It should be noted that outsourcing authority activity needs to acknowledge the limits of what the computer can and cannot do. It is probably appropriate to break authority work into the three following groups:

- 1) what the computer can do completely
- 2) what the human must do, but the computer can identify and assist

### 3) what only the human can do and the computer may not be able to identify

Group one is what we are seeking with automatic derivation/claiming. Vendors offer this process at about \$0.10 a bibliographic record for ongoing services (lower prices might be available for larger files and retrospective work but along with these lower prices, record files may be out for weeks and changes could not be made to bibliographic headings in that time period) In the span of time from 2/2/96 to 7/2/96 our collective bibliographic file grew from 8,468,215 to 8,685,271, an increase of 217,056 records. The vendor bill for that processing would have been \$21,705.60. At this time we do not have a cost figure for what this would cost FCLA; John Hein has been doing automatic derivation/claiming at UNF. He may have some guess of cost?

We did, however, have the opportunity to compare costs for the weekly service we have of changing and reporting authority record revisions. FCLA offers a variety of reporting and overlaying options dependent on how libraries wish to deal with names, subjects, and series. UF has subject and name authorities overlaid and reported (reporting for only 1xx changes and/or locally edited authorities) and series are reported and then manually reviewed and derived. The series work can be extensive--it might represent 50% of the human effort needed in handling weekly changes. It certainly falls into group 3 above-- what only the human can do. Series complications include classification treatment changes, changes in see references to see also references, adding local treatment, etc. The computer may or may not be able to identify these changes, but it would not be able to resolve the problems.

In the Vendor inventory posted to TS-PLAN we were able to chart the BNA charges for a comparable weekly reporting service. Since there is separate reporting and separate authority files, each institution was calculated.

Those charges are repeated here:

Institution	Bibl File Size	Weekly charge	Annual Cost
FAMU	367,423	\$54	\$2808
FAU	636,309	\$88	\$4576
FIU	685,001	\$88	\$4576
FSU	1,615,266	\$162	\$8424
UCF	629,322	\$88	\$4576
UF	2,177,180	\$187	\$9724
UNF	454,554	\$72	\$3744
USF	1,462,010	\$137	\$7124
UWF	439,847	\$72	\$3744
TOTAL			\$49,296

FCLA pays \$5200 a year for the Peter Ward & Associates weekly updates to the LC authority file. The average weekly processing costs for the nine institutional files and the LTLC file is \$41.42 or \$2153.84

annually (taking figures from five weeks). It is a highly automated process and FCLA spends only 15 minutes a week for verification. The only other cost is FCLA staff time if something goes wrong. It probably is safe to consider the SUS is spending less than \$10,000 a year to accomplish this same process for which we would pay a vendor \$49,000+. Both processes would still entail the same staff costs in adjusting affected bibliographic records. That is not part of the \$49,000. It will be interesting to see if once we get automatic derivation/claiming going if it will cost 20% of what we would pay a vendor, thus \$.02 a bibliographic record.

The Authority Committee does not think it is cost effective or mutually beneficial to pursue cooperative agreements with a commercial vendor for authority processing. However there is software that UF has been beta testing from Gary Strawn of Northwestern University that would be cost effective and mutually beneficial and would involve more intense automation at the local level. Gary's CLARR software runs on Windows computers and performs very speedily on 16 RAM machines. It runs effectively on 8RAM as well, but not as speedily. Do avoid 4RAM. It does what was identified as Group 1 above--what the computer can do completely and also Group 2--what the human must do, but the computer can identify and assist. This local level automation would be balanced with continued and new centralized FCLA routines.

For instance if all new cataloging was CLARRed, probably the review of the New Monthly Headings list could be done away with. CLARR identifies all headings under authority control, reports if authorities are in the institution's file, identifies all free floaters and lets one know if these have typos or are questionable. It verifies all geographic subdivisions, and creates local authorities with the click of the mouse. Cross references on authorities can be checked with clicking on the field and then clicking on CLARR's fi button.

The Committee can this year rethink staff time and effort devoted to various authority activities. Automatic derivation/claiming (current headings and retrospective headings) along with the use of CLARR might allow us to tackle Error Detection reports and to review headings that don't capture authorities. The CLARR software does cause one to think about other programming/processing possibilities for file clean up. Software for Error Detection assistance developed by Gary Strawn may be a beta test possibility. As FCLA works on the automatic derivation/claiming software we will need to make some decisions on how far or how refined we may wish to make the process. UNF probably will have some ideas and experience to share. And finally costing out our activity and processes needs to be ongoing. It is indeed an exciting and challenging time to be involved in authority work.