Planning For The Adoption Of AACR-2 At The University Of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

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The March 1979 issue of *American Libraries* carried an article by David Gleim and myself entitled "Adopting AACR-2: The Case for Not Closing the Catalog." The intent of that article was to be provocative, to present a case that had been ignored in the literature. The article sought to give some balance to the influences shaping the AACR-2 and catalog closure decision in research libraries. It was written, quite frankly, in a state of irritation at the one-sidedness of the AACR-2 debate in published sources.

It was not the purpose of that article to describe the decision of the University of North Carolina with respect to closing the card catalog. But the principal themes of the aritcle—that the adoption of AACR-2 does not necessarily require closure, and that leaving the catalog open may be the best alternative in some libraries—were adopted as basic assumptions of the library's bibliographic planning committees. The library is, indeed, strongly oriented in the direction of leaving the catalog open, if not yet irretrievably committed. The point of the article was to describe the option of not closing as one worthy of consideration, not to encourage other libraries to follow this example. The actual decision was based on numerous local factors rather than a theoretical position with respect to card catalogs.

As expected, the *American Libraries* article elicited a number of requests for background studies and committee reports. Unfortunately, our planning efforts to date have not culminated in a single report suitable for distribution. Although we have amassed a considerable collection of memoranda, minutes and interim reports from subcommittees, none of these is easy to interpret by someone who has not been immersed in our planning process. This paper will summarize briefly the status of planning for the adoption of AACR-2 at UNC-Chapel Hill, since the response to our article indicates some curiosity about the conditions that give rise to the notion of not closing the card catalog. Another paper is being prepared on the on-line distributed network now being planned by Duke University, North Carolina State University, and University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. This paper will be made available as soon as possible.

Planning Groups

Three groups of the UNC-CH Academic Affairs Library are working on various aspects of the AACR-2 issue. These are the Task Force on Bibliographic Planning (TFBP), the Computer Applications Task Force (CATF), and the Technical Services Committee. The TFBP, chaired by David Gleim, has the most specific charge related to AACR-2. The TFBP is a technical group made up mainly of cataloging staff. It is charged with investigating the impact of AACR-2 on the manual bibliographic files and the procedures by which these files are maintained and updated, and with recommending whether to close or continue the present card catalog. The Task Force is also charged with developing the policies and procedures for carrying through with the recommended alternative.

The CATF is a technical group charged with general planning and coordination of the library's automation efforts. One of its projects is the investigation and planning of automated alternatives to the card catalog. To date, the efforts of the CATF have focused on developing the machine-readable bibliographic files and the systems for updating and maintaining them locally. In terms of the bibliographic products and services to be derived from these files, much attention has been given to the possibility of a distributed on-line local network, initially including UNC-CH, Duke University and North Carolina State University. A grant request to fund this network under Title II-C was submitted by the Triangle University Libraries Cooperation Committee. If this proposal is not funded, the work of the CATF will proceed in the direction of on-line network as its ultimate goal in cooperation with staff from Duke and North Carolina State University.

Although close working relationships have been established between the TFBP and the CATF, the two groups are not viewed as working together on the "AACR-2 problem." That problem rests squarely with the TFBP. CATF is naturally concerned with the impact of the code on cataloging records, but it views AACR-2 as part of the general systems problem of authority control of large machine-readible files. The Task Force's mission is to recommend a plan for the development of automated catalogs which is realistic in terms of the library's resources and the present state of its bibliographic systems. The CATF was not asked to meet a target date imposed by the adoption of AACR-2, since there are other planning and systems factors more critical in terms of their long-range significance.

The Technical Services Committee is a standing committee which serves as a forum for public and technical services staff to discuss operational problems and long-range planning related to technical services. Its responsibility in connection with AACR-2 is to collect and analyze opinions of public service staff concerning options proposed by the TFBP. The Committee develops examples and interview guides designed to inform public service staff on options under consideration and to provide systematic feedback to the TFBP.

The TFBP, however, has primary responsibility for the AACR-2 planning effort and made the recommendation to continue the single card catalog after 1981. The TFBP was formed several months after LC's announcement at the 1978 ALA Mid-winter meeting of its plans to adopt AACR-2 and to close its catalogs in 1980. The Task Force deliberated for some five months before making its recommendation, which came even before LC's disclosure of all the options designed to mitigate the impact of AACR-2. To understand the rationale for this recommendation, it is necessary to be aware of the full context of the library administration's charge to the Task Force.

Charge to the TFBP

First, the Task Force was informed that the library would adopt AACR-2 in concert with LC, at least insofar as applying it to original cataloging records produced by the library and input into a national data base. The Task Force was instructed not to debate the basic question of whether or not to adopt ACCR-2.

Second, the Task Force was told that a transition to a machine-readable catalog in 1981 (then 1980) did not represent a reasonable schedule in terms of the planning of the CATF, although some form of machine-readable catalog could be provided if the Task Force determined that continuing the card catalog after 1981 would be operationally intolerable. It was stressed, however, that this would not be optimal scheduling with respect to other planning factors, particularly budget.

Third, the Task Force was told to work under the assumption that the problems posed by the adoption of AACR-2 were transitional. Not only was AACR-2 itself a transitional code, but the card catalog would be repalced by a machine-readable catalog during the 1980s, perhaps as early as 1983 and probably no later than 1985. The group was asked to take this eventual transition to a machine based catalog into consideration in recommending an approach to adopting AACR-2 in 1981; they were alerted particularly to the possibility that current records of all types may not be machine-readable even at the time of the later transition.

Finally, the Task Force was assured of administrative understanding of the fact that the cost of cataloging would increase as a result of the adoption of AACR-2 by whatever means, although it was expected that the cost increases would be temporary. Additional staff for units affected by the increases would come mainly from a re-ordering of priorities in the Catalog Department and perhaps in other Technical Services departments. The Task Force was to recommend a solution that would minimize cost increases while providing acceptable bibliographic access to the collections.

It may seem that this rather firm administrative direction undesirably predisposed the deliberations of the Task Force, but this does not appear to be the case. This framework was explained and discussed at length with the Task Force, and for the most part was accepted as reasonable by the members of the group. Closing the catalog was the theme of most of the literature related to AACR-2 when the Task Force began, and closure was thought at the time to be the most likely recommendation. As the analysis of local factors led the group more and more in the direction of leaving the catalog open, the Task Force retraced its steps on several occasions to make sure that no vital consideration had been overlooked. In making its recommendation, the TFBP was uncomfortably aware that its decision seemed in conflict with current trends reflected in the literature, although the recommendation seemed clearly justified by the examination of local factors.

Approach to the Problem

One key decision determined the orientation of the Task Force to its charge. Since it was apparent that a good deal of time would be required to prepare for the implementation of the chosen alternative, it was decided that an early decision was highly desirable. For that reason, the TFBP chose not to investigate alternatives which were clearly impracticable, such as continuing the card catalog by bringing all entries into line with AACR-2. Another

decision was implicit in the outcome of the committee's work, although it was not addressed directly; the Task Force decided not to collect extensive data on the impact of the code on specific entries in the UNC-CH catalog until **after** an approach to adopting the code had been selected. Instead, such studies would be conducted to provide the basis for the full operational development of the preferred alternative. These studies are now underway and are described in some detail below.

Questions have been raised regarding the collection of specific impact data after the decision to retain the single card catalog. This approach admittedly calls for explanation. The Task Force's recommendation was based on a systematic comparison of two alternatives: (1) beginning an add-on card catalog in 1981 and (2) continuing the single card catalog by integrating new headings into the file by a variety of techniques such as changing headings, creating split files, and interfiling. These alternatives were compared with respect to a number of factors, including acceptability to staff users of the catalog and the effects on cataloging operations. In making these comparisons, flow-through volume of various types of conflicts were estimated from data provided by LC. As the study progressed, it became clear that so many factors supported the continuation of the single catalog as the preferred option that more precise data on the number of heading changes in the UNC-CH catalog would not affect the decision.

The recommendation of the TFBP to the library administration may be summarized as follows: *it will not be necessary for the library to undertake a crash program to produce a machine based catalog in 1981; adequate and affordable means are available for continuing the catalog in card form for an extended period of transition to machine-readable catalogs; the preferred means for this transition at the UNC-CH Academic Affairs Library is the continuation of the single card catalog after 1981, an option which apparently will result in cost increases not significantly greater than would creating an add-on card catalog.* The library administration reviewed this proposal and explored its implications thoroughly with the Task Force before accepting it as the library's approach to the adoption of AACR-2.

Factors Considered

More factors entered into this decision than can be analayzed in this writing, but some of the more important considerations are noted and briefly described below:

(1) ACCEPTABILITY OF OPTIONS: staff users of the catalog expressed a strong preference for the single card catalog, even when it would be integrated by compromise measures such as split files. The rejection of the add-on card catalog was particularly strong when coupled with the idea of not providing reference links between the two catalogs. Since the date of cataloging seemed the only reasonable basis for separating the active and inactive files, a search of both files would be required to be certain of the library's holdings. This problem would be particularly acute since the library expects to add a high volume of retrospective titles. Two separate card catalogs, each potentially covering the same time span of publication dates, was viewed as highly undesirable by the staff and acceptable only as a last resort for economic reasons.

Because of the lack of acceptance of the add-on card catalog, the question facing the Task Force became more than a simple cost comparison

of the alternatives. Rather, it became a matter of determining if the added value of one alternative justified its added cost, if any. The Task Force was not totally swayed by the overwhelming rejection of the add-on card catalog, since split catalogs are inevitable for most research libraries which plan to change to computerized catalogs in the future, but the rejection did make the Task Force sensitive to the fact that split catalogs should be adopted only when absolutely necessary.

(2) ACCEPTABILITY OF COMPROMISE MEASURES: a major consideration in the Task Force's recommendation was the determination that techniques such as the use of split files and selective interfiling are considered acceptable by most staff users of the catalog. This determination was made following a study by the Technical Services Committee, which revealed a degree of acceptance of these techniques which was surprising both to the library administration and to the TFBP. The report included several caveats, however; split files are acceptable only when the cross reference structure is meticulously maintained; some means should be found to make see also references more prominent in the catalog, or at least a study should be conducted to determine the best place to file see also references; use of split files should be avoided for headings already complicated by name changes; interfiling of drastically differing forms of a heading behind raised guide cards would not be an acceptable practice, but interfiling of headings with minor differences in form would be acceptable.

The acceptance of split files by library staff at UNC-CH is perhaps a localized phenomenon resulting from our previous use of these files for selected headings. The consensus was not that split files are particularly desirable, but that they will work if used carefully. Because of this attitude of acceptance, the TFBP was free to compare the option of the add-on card catalog with a pragmatic program for intergrating AACR-2 headings into the single catalog, rather than with an unrealistic definition of this option. This was an important element in the decision.

(3) AMELIORATING CONDITIONS AND TECHNIQUES: the TFBP also took into consideration certain conditions of the card catalog and techniques which would facilitate the integration of AACR-2 forms into the existing catalog. The availability of photographic methods for changing large files of headings was one such factor. The technique was developed by Sam Boone, head of Interlibrary and Photoduplication Services. The method makes use of Xerox Copyflo equipment, which limits its application to the relatively small number of libraries which have access to this equipment. Mr. Boone is investigating the possibility of offering heading change services to users of the UNC-CH card reproduction service.

Changing headings by photographic means is not a general solution to problems of accommodating AACR-2. In many cases, the main cost of changing cards is relocating the cards in the catalog, depending upon the size of the file, the distance of the relocation, and the amount of excess file space available. Photographic alteration of headings will be used at UNC-CH only under certain conditions, which have yet to be defined. It does appear, however, that the technique will be useful. One area of application, for example, will be changes in the construction of an author's forename, since the relocation will not be great.

Another factor which the Task Force took into consideration was the generally sound condition of the UNC-CH catalog itself. Systematic replacement of worn and deteriorating cards has kept the catalog in good physical

condition. The cross reference structure has been carefully maintained. There is sufficient filing space for the next five years; there is no filing backlog of any consequence. Aside from any AACR-2 related considerations, the condition of the catalog does not yet require that it be put to rest.

Certain cataloging practices will also serve to ease the accommodation of AACR-2 headings. Numerous split files with *see also* references from desuperimposed AACR-1 forms have been established in recent years by the Serials Cataloging unit. A long-standing practice of not making added entries for editions after the first will reduce the number of cards to be changed in many cases.

Although each of these factors individually is rather minor, taken together they add up to a condition that facilitates considerably the maintenance of the single card catalog after 1981. Many of these factors may exist in other libraries, but the particular combination of conditions found by the CATF at UNC-CH is probably unique. Every library faced with the problem of accommodating AACR-2 should look closely at local conditions before adopting an approach and should not be overly influenced by generalized approaches recommended in the literature.

(4) EFFECTS ON CATALOG OPERATIONS: it was obvious to the Task Force that the comparison between an integrated catalog and an add-on card catalog was essentially a choice between *where* cost increases would occur in the cataloging operations. The add-on card catalog would reduce the cost of catalog maintenance but raise the cost of cataloging with copy. The single card catalog would increase the cost of catalog maintenance and perhaps cause only moderate increases in the cost of cataloging with copy.

The Task Force developed hypothetical workflows of each case in order to analyze the trade-offs of the two options. The add-on card catalog would require that staff using existing cataloging copy examine records for compatibility with AACR-2. This scrutiny would also have to apply to cards now filed in the card catalog but not produced by the central catalog department, for example, those from Rare Books, the North Carolina Collection, and the Health Affairs Library. The reclassification project, a high volume operation based on the use of existing copy with minimal editing, would be particularly affected. The add-on catalog also poses complex problems in the treatment of continuations.

Importance of Local Conditions

The reclassification project is a prime example of a local factor capable of strongly influencing a library's evaluation of options. We are well aware that professional opinion on the subject of reclassification for research library collections is predominantly negative, yet we are unashamedly engaged in reclassification on a large scale. In 1982, the Academic Affairs Library will move into a new central library building. At that time the general collections will be moved to the new building and a depository collection of low use materials will remain in Wilson Library. The reclassification project is designed to reclass the high use materials into LC so the collection in the main building will be in a single classification. The project was undertaken because reclassification appeared only slightly more costly than adding location statements to cards for titles remaining in the depository collection; by defining the depository collections as the volumes remaining in Dewey after reclassification of high use items, the classification itself will denote the building in which

the item is located. In short, reclassification is a good investment for a number of reasons unique to the institution, although the weight of professional judgment is strongly against it, which leads to the point of this digression—any important decision, such as adopting a method for accommodating AACR-2, is always heavily influenced by unique local conditions. It is just as presumptious to pronounce judgment on such decisions without knowledge of local factors as it is to suggest that the decisions are applicable elsewhere.

Impact of Two Options

To return to the main theme, the option of continuing the single card catalog also promised its share of undesirable effects on cataloging operations. Only cursory analysis was necessary to determine that it would be unbearably expensive to attempt to bring all existing headings into line with conflicting AACR-2 headings going into the catalog after 1981. Even by compromising the principle of uniformity of entry, there would be considerable increases in catalog maintenance costs. In addition, the variable treatment of heading changes by interfiling, creation of split files, and changing headings would create the need for prompting lists for copy catalogers that will slow down their work to some extent. With respect to the effects of the two alternatives on cataloging operations, the choice was obviously between the less undesirable of two less than desirable options.

In comparing the operational effects of the two options, however, it was clear that they differed in two critical respects. First, in the case of continuing the single catalog, cost increases would be concentrated to a large extent in the catalog maintenance function. In the case of the add-on catalog, cost increases would be less dramatic at any single point but would be diffused throughout Technical Services from bibliographical searching through copy cataloging. For this reason, it would be extremely difficult to quantify the cost increases for this option before its implementation, but the TFBP was convinced that they could be considerable. All things being equal, it also appeared preferable from the management viewpoint to have increases in workload concentrated in one area for purposes of equitable deployment of staff to meet the need.

Likewise, the impact of the options on materials passing through the system is specific in one case and general in the other. In the case of the single card catalog, delays in filing cards for newly acquired titles would apply only to those associated with headings formed differently under AACR-2 and in conflict with headings already in the catalog. In the case of the add-on card catalog, there would be a general slowdown of all cataloging functions, except filing, due to the need to examine all copy for conformity to AACR-2. The single catalog option would also offer the opportunity to backlog, if necessary, a subset of new cards—cards with certain types of heading conflicts—without affecting the great majority of new materials going into the collection. In short, the operational problems associated with the single card catalgo appeared to be more easily contained and controlled, both in terms of the staff and the materials affected.

As already noted, it was quite clear that maintaining the single card catalog need not emerge as the least costly alternative in order to be the preferred option. *Without the benefit of precise cost data,* the Task Force took the risk of concluding that the option of beginning an add-on card catalog was not clearly superior in terms of cost to maintaining the single card catalog, and indeed could even be more costly. This conclusion was based on

a logical analysis of the steps involved in each process with estimated data on the number of heading conflicts to be handled in 1981.

Impact Studies

The decision to retain the single card catalog in 1981 remains to be converted into a detailed operational plan including written guidelines and policies, flowcharts of procedures, and precise cost estimates for budget planning. To provide the basis of such a plan is the purpose of the impact studies now underway. These studies differ somewhat from studies designed to compare the basic alternatives.

A sample of 918 cards was drawn from the 1978 file of OCLC cataloging. This sample is large enough for a 95% confidence level with a precision interval of ± 2% for most of the proportions expected in the study. The base sample will be supplemented by a sample of 1978 non-Roman alphabet cards and other cataloging not done through OCLC.

Main and Added Entry Headings

The main and added entry headings appearing on cards in the sample area are now being analyzed by professional catalogers to determine if the AACR-2 form, as constructed under LC's adoption of options, will differ from AACR-1 headings. Those headings which will be constructed differently will then be checked in the card catalog to determine if they are in conflict with headings already in use. If so, the number of cards involved will be tabulated. At this point the *type* of conflict will be analyzed. Then a judgment will be made concerning the appropriate method to resolve the conflict: should a split file be created, will cards be changed photographically or manually, will the main entry as the secondary filing element have to be changed, and others. When completed, the study will provide not only rates of conflict and the number of cards involved, but also flow-through volume estimates for the various techniques of resolving conflicts.

At the present stage of the study, headings in the sample are being checked against the catalog to discover the various cases that can occur. These will then be analzyed and categorized by such dimensions as degree and type of conflict, number of cards, and extent of relocation if cards are changed. The categories of conflicts will then be assigned to a method of handling. Guidelines for determining the proper method will be written in some detail for use in tabulating data. The same guidelines will be used, probably with some adjustments, under operational conditions after 1981.

Other Types of Data

Two other types of data will be gathered as part of the study—cost data, and consensus data on options. Base data on the present cost of catalog maintenance has already been collected. The time required to perform various catalog integration procedures after 1981 will be determined and used in combination with volume data for various conflict resolution procedures to provide the basis for estimating cost increases for catalog maintenance after 1981. These in turn will be used for planning reallocation of staff resources in Technical Services.

Data on the acceptability of some options is still required, the major one being the extent to which it will be necessary to change headings for main entries on added entry cards. The appropriateness of this option is perhaps the single major determinant of the number of cards that will have to be

changed after 1981. It is already obvious that there will be cases when this practice will be acceptable and other cases in which it will not. The Technical Services Committee will collect and tabulate data on the opinions of the public service staff regarding the possible effects of this and other similar options on users of the catalog.

When all studies have been completed, it is planned to develop a model for various decisions that must be made prior to the implementation of a detailed plan. The model will match each category of conflict with various methods for resolving them in the catalog; each conflict will be associated with an estimated rate of occurrence determined by the study; each method of resolution will be associated with cost data and an acceptability rating. These factors will be weighed carefully before adopting a method for resolving conflicts under various conditions.

Three points are already clear from the preliminary phases of the UNC-CH study. First, this type of study is absolutely necessary for any library intending to continue the single card catalog after 1981. Problems in analyzing the sample have shown that to avoid massive confusion when these conflicts actually begin coming through the system, it will be necessary that categories and procedures for handling them be firmly established. Second, the study also shows that, regardless of the detail of the guidelines for resolving conflicts, considerable judgment will be necessary to make specific decisions regarding headings after 1981. This implies the need for abundant lead time for staff training. Finally, it is clear that conducting such a study and preparing for operational conditions will be a lengthy process, and the TFBP does not regret coming to an early decision on the basic approach to be taken in 1981.

The UNC-CH studies will be made available to those who request them when they are completed. It is not expected, however, that the studies will be completed before the Spring of 1980. By that time, all libraries should be well on their way to planning for the adoption of the new code.

Automated Catalogs

As described above, the investigations of the TFBP were focused on the choice between retaining the single card catalog and starting an add-on card catalog. It was noted that the administrative charge to the TFBP included the observation that a COM catalog was a possible alternative, if compelled by the adoption of the code, but that 1981 was not considered the best time for the transition. Many of the questions received as result of the *American Libraries* article are concerned with our position on this question.

Factors Regarding Adoption of a COM Catalog

It is not possible to address this matter thoroughly in this paper, but some of the factors that were taken into consideration are described briefly below. It is again necessary to emphasize that many of these factors are local in nature and may not be applicable elsewhere.

1. BUDGET

It would be extremely difficult at UNC-CH to have adequate funds available by 1981 in the proper budget lines for computing services and purchase for microform eqipment.

2. POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT TRANSITION TO ON-LINE CATALOG

The investigations of the CATF and the Triangle University Libraries Cooperation Committee, supplemented by consulting report by John Knapp and Ritvar Bregzis, are pointing more and more to the possibility of a transition directly to an on-line catalog operated by in-house computers. There is a growing probability that COM can be by-passed if the transition to automated catalogs can be delayed for several years.

3. ADEQUACY OF COM CATALOG

There were grave doubts about the adequacy a COM catalog as the primary means of access to the collections without extensive conversion of the records.

4. IMPACT ON CATALOGING OPERATIONS

Following the studies of the TFBP, it was clear that the negative effects on the cataloging with copy operations, described above in connection with the add-on card catalog option, would also apply to the production of an AACR-2 compatible COM catalog. This would have the effect of delaying cost recovery for the production of the COM catalog.

Finally, there was also considerable resistance to the association of such a major event in the history of the library with a sense of compulsion by conditons beyond our control. This is admittedly a subjective consideration, but one of some importance, given the nature of our institution and constituency.

In the foregoing, we have identified and discussed the role of three groups working on adoption of AACR II at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

We have described the local conditions which have been important in our decision.

We have identified four factors which appear primary to us in planning to implement AACR II:

1. acceptability of options;
2. acceptability of compromise measures;
3. ameliorating conditions and techniques;
4. effects on catalog operations.

We have related the current position regarding the best date for the initiation of a COM Catalog for this institution.

In all of the above, the potential impact of AACR II, the anticipation of entering a new library building in 1982, and the possibility of a joint university on-line bibliographic system have all been factors in our decision-making process.

Impact studies now underway will form the basis for a detailed plan for implementing AACR II at UNC-CH.

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A Short Bibliography of Recent Articles on AACR-2 and Closed Catalogs

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