Collaborative Cataloging Pilot Project

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Abstract

Two Keystone Library Network of Pennsylvania academic libraries, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania and Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, partnered to conduct a pilot project involving assistance from one library with cataloging of materials for the other. This article describes the steps involved in obtaining approvals, meeting legal, identifying appropriate materials and transporting them, establishing guidelines, and conducting email consultations as needed. Once the materials were cataloged and returned, assessment criteria were developed and agreed upon, assessment was conducted, and discussion was held regarding future similar projects. As a result, a cataloging business plan was developed and approved, and a new service launched.

Keywords

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Keywords: Keystone Library Network; Cataloging; Technical services

Introduction

Outsourcing of cataloging is not a new concept. Various business enterprises have been formed over the years, and still exist, to perform original or copy cataloging, or both, for libraries with insufficient staffing levels to do it themselves. Some of these businesses may even be comprised of a single individual functioning as an independent contractor. Among academic institutions, it is common for cataloging of branch materials to be done at the main campus rather than in-house at the branch. Cornell and Columbia universities have begun a cooperative program to actually integrate their technical services operations.[i] Within the Keystone Library Network of Pennsylvania, however, two academic libraries, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania and Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, partnered to conduct a pilot project involving assistance from one library with cataloging of materials for the other.

Collaborative Cataloging Pilot Project Proposal

The Keystone Library Network (KLN) is a consortium of 18 academic and research libraries in Pennsylvania with management offices housed within the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), Office of the Chancellor. The 18 libraries include the 14 state-owned universities, the State Library of Pennsylvania and its affiliate libraries, and three private colleges/universities, all of which use Ex Libris' Voyager integrated library system. Even before the formation of the KLN, the library directors at the 14 state-owned universities met regularly as a group -- the State System of Higher Education Library Council (SSHELCO) -- to discuss library-related issues. Subsequent to the formation of KLN, SSHELCO sponsored an annual meeting/conference consisting of general sessions and break-out sessions presented by library personnel from the KLN libraries.

At the 2014 SSHELCO Annual Meeting/Conference in early March 2014, Scott DiMarco, Library Director, and Jamey Harris, Coordinator of Technical Services, both of the Mansfield University-Library and Information Resources Division, delivered a break-out session presentation in which they proposed that their North Hall Library (NHL) collaborate in a pilot project that offers cataloging services to other PASSHE/KLN libraries. The project purpose was three-fold:

- To provide a great product at a fair price

- To develop partners among the PASSHE/KLN Libraries

- To establish guidelines, system-wide processes, and standards

Benefit to Mansfield

In North Hall Library's case, WorldCat bibliographic records are found for most of the materials that are purchased. Original records were created for some gift items. Original records needed for books, theses, DVDs, and CDs that were received prior to 2012 were created. These items are now available for patron use and corresponding records can be found in the Mansfield University Library Catalog.

In academic years 2013/2014 and 2014/2015, North Hall Library was not allocated an acquisitions budget for physical materials to support Mansfield University's curriculum. No budget meant no items to catalog. Additionally, during academic years 2013/2014, the Coordinator of Technical Services position was included in Mansfield University's retrenchment plan. In recent years, staffing levels have decreased at most of the other KLN/PASSHE libraries as well. By partnering with another library on cataloging projects, Mansfield University would be able to keep cataloging skills current while retaining in-house the skills, knowledge, and ex-

pertise needed to appropriately conduct, manage, and advise on catalog-related projects, procedures, reports, and decisions.

Benefit to Bloomsburg

Bloomsburg University's Harvey A. Andruss Library has had, over the years, technical services staffing reductions from a high of four librarians to the current one librarian, the Coordinator of Cataloging and (for the past four years) Interim Coordinator of Collection Development (Marilou Hinchcliff). One support staff position was also lost. The materials budget has, fortunately, remained healthy. As the result of the staffing reductions, small-to-medium sized backlogs of various types of uncatalogued materials had developed. Planning in late March/early April 2014 for the Coordinator's contract for Summer 2014, made it clear that there were more than enough current duties (as well as one backlog-related duty and two new initiatives) to occupy the time. At the same time, additional weeks (first two, then four) were made available by the administration, but personal commitments prevented her from accepting more than her traditional six weeks. It immediately became apparent to Hinchcliff that this was an opportunity to accomplish at least a partial backlog reduction, and Mansfield's presentation leapt to mind. Consequently she suggested a pilot project to Bloomsburg's Director of Library Services, Charlotte Droll, who agreed. Jamey Harris was contacted to ascertain her interest and ability to take on the project. Her director, Scott DiMarco, agreed to the pilot project, and a four-week time period was selected based on the schedules of the two coordinators. It was agreed that Harris would perform the cataloging in her Technical Services office at Mansfield and that Hinchcliff would answer any questions via email or telephone.

Hiring Process

Bloomsburg's Office of Human Resources explained that in order to hire a Mansfield librarian to work for Bloomsburg for the four-week period, the position would have to be filled in the same manner as any limited-term vacancy, which meant the Library's temporary pool would have to be utilized. Departments at Bloomsburg may maintain a pool of candidates that have responded to a local advertisement for librarians to work in the Library for a limited period of time when a short-notice vacancy occurs. Harris applied to the pool and was deemed qualified by the Temporary Pool Search and Screen Committee based on the advertisement for a cataloging librarian. In fact, she was the only applicant in the pool for a Cataloging vacancy. Nevertheless, all temporary pool search and screen procedures had to be followed. The Andruss Library Temporary Pool Search and Screen Committee, working with the University's Office of Social Equity, prepared questions, conducted telephone interviews, checked references, and found Harris to be satisfactory for the position. Director of Library Services Charlotte Droll offered her the short-term position, which she accepted, and the committee chairperson communicated with her to have the appropriate forms filled out. Salary was based on the level specified by the Collective Bargaining Agreement. At the request of Director Droll, Bloomsburg's Provost agreed to fund it at Harris' current rank and step. Amazingly, getting the approval of the two administrations to share staff was quite smooth. The necessity of having to do it through the hiring process was the only true hurdle.

Identification of Materials to be Cataloged

Hinchcliff felt that for the pilot project, only those materials requiring attention by a professional librarian should be sent. This meant that materials requiring original cataloging and for-

eign language materials were the most appropriate candidates since Bloomsburg Cataloging staff were not comfortable with foreign-language cataloging. While some Archives and Special Collections materials were awaiting professional attention, they require knowledge of local places and people that Harris would not possess. The most obvious of the materials in need of professional attention were the theses and departmental papers. These ostensibly required only assignment of subject headings and were a high priority backlog (students had begun seeking access to them), and their transfer to Harris from Hinchcliff's to-do list would ensure their completion while freeing up Hinchcliff's time for her other summer projects. A set of microfiche scores in German had been behind the Circulation Desk uncatalogued for an untold number of years, then were moved up to Cataloging for attention when most specialized materials were removed from behind the Circulation Desk three years previously. There appeared to be OCLC copy for them all and Hinchcliff had cataloged a few of them, which could be used as templates. A purchased collection of Spanish and Portuguese books had also been awaiting cataloging for some time, although they had been worked on sporadically with assistance from persons with Spanish language skills. They would also be a good addition to Bloomsburg's Spanish literature collection that had not been heavily added to on a regular basis. When the telephone interviews revealed that Harris had some reading knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese and had in fact cataloged such materials in a previous job, these materials became another obvious part of the project.

Transportation Issues

One of the benefits of the pilot project involving Mansfield and Bloomsburg was the relatively close proximity of the two universities. The original plan was for Hinchcliff to deliver the 13 boxes of materials to Mansfield during the

course of a short vacation trip to that area. Unfortunately, the vacation was cancelled at the last minute, after the boxes had been loaded into her car. Bloomsburg's Director Droll agreed that Hinchcliff could go ahead and deliver them as planned and be reimbursed for the mileage. When Harris completed the cataloging of these materials sooner than expected, additional materials were mailed via FedEx. Upon completion of the project, there was the question of how to return the boxes to Bloomsburg. Mansfield University's Director DiMarco and Harris decided to use a University vehicle and deliver them in person. This provided an opportunity for them to meet with Droll and Hinchcliff at Bloomsburg to discuss the project's outcomes and assessment methods, as well as possibilities for, and issues that could arise with, future projects.

Description of Cataloging Process

Prior to delivering the materials to Mansfield, Hinchcliff had e-mailed information and instructions regarding the work needed to Harris. (The specific work needed on each collection is described in the next section, Assessment.) Bloomsburg's Cataloging student assistants had prepared descriptive cataloging for the theses and departmental papers based on a template; the records were saved to an OCLC Connexion Client file. The microfiche scores were searched in OCLC and records were saved to a third file. The Spanish/Portuguese books had been searched in the past and had printouts of OCLC records in them. The Cataloging student assistants retrieved these records in OCLC and saved them to a fourth file. The files were copied to a flash drive for Harris' use. All materials were to be barcoded by Bloomsburg before they were sent. Harris emailed completed portions of the files back to Hinchcliff periodically and returned the flash drive at the end of the project. There were many e-mail exchanges between Harris and Hinchcliff to clarify instructions due to differences in workflows between the two cataloging units and unanticipated issues that arose.

Harris discovered that not all books were barcoded as expected, so instructions were needed on what if anything Hinchcliff wanted her to do regarding the addition of barcode numbers in the bibliographic record. Other questions arose regarding such issues as multiple 050 call number fields in the bibliographic records, local practice for art theses, what to do with a second copy, and whether Harris was expected to update holdings in OCLC for Bloomsburg, upgrade AACR1 to AACR2, add dates to call numbers, and retain or delete 776 fields, 029 fields, and 6xx fields with 2nd indicators other than 0.

It should be noted that since this project was completed during summer, Mansfield University's Coordinator of Technical Services was hired as a Bloomsburg University temporary faculty member. In the role of a Bloomsburg University employee, the Coordinator of Technical Services was very careful to tune out requests from Mansfield University personnel.

Assessment

Quantity

THESES: Bloomsburg University's students created new bibliographic records for theses based on a template. The records were saved to an OCLC Connexion local file on a network drive. The records were checked by Bloomsburg's Cataloging Technician. After assigning a standard series call number, Bloomsburg's Cataloging Technician copied the file to a flash drive. Bloomsburg's staff boxed up the theses and sent them along with the flash drive to Mansfield. Harris added Library of Congress subject headings to the records on the flash drive.

Table 1: BLOOMSBURG THESES	
Number of theses sent by Bloomsburg	47
Number of LC Subject Headings added by Mansfield	96
Number of hours spent on project by Mansfield	22.5

DEPARTMENTAL PAPERS: Bloomsburg University's students created new bibliographic records for departmental papers based on a template. The records were saved to an OCLC Connexion local file on a network drive. The records were checked by Bloomsburg's Cataloging Technician. After assigning a standard series call number, Bloomsburg's Cataloging Technician copied the file to a flash drive. Bloomsburg's staff boxed up the departmental papers and sent them along with the flash drive to Mansfield. Harris added Library of Congress subject headings to the records on the flash drive.

Table 2: BLOOMSBURG Departmental Papers	
Number of papers sent by Bloomsburg	45
Number of LC Subject Headings added by Mansfield	123
Number of hours spent on project by Mansfield	13

MICROFICHE MUSIC SCORES IN GERMAN IN 3-RING BINDERS: Hinchcliff provided printouts of the Voyager records for the scores she had already done; these served as examples. Harris searched OCLC to find appropriate bibliographic records; reviewed the entire bibliographic records; edited as necessary for accuracy

and to add anything indicated by the examples; added subject headings as necessary; added 099 field with Bloomburg's local microfiche call number; changed 049 to PBBI, Bloomsburg's OCLC code for materials in the microfiche collection. Hinchcliff created an OCLC Connexion file on the flash drive. Bloomsburg's staff boxed up the theses and sent them along with the flash drive to Mansfield. Harris saved the records on the flash drive.

Table 3: BLOOMSBURG Microfiche Music Scores in Binders	
Number of copy records found by Mansfield	24
Number of hours spent on project by Mansfield	12.5

SPANISH/PORTUGUESE BOOKS: Bloomsburg included printouts of OCLC records. Bloomsburg's students downloaded the OCLC records to a Connexion local file on the flash drive. Bloomsburg's staff boxed up the books and sent them along with the flash drive to Mansfield. Harris reviewed the cataloging and classification, including controlling the 1xx, 6xx, and 7xx fields to make sure they were valid headings (reviewing and accepting or changing any that were not); added any access points or other information as necessary; browsed the classification number in Bloomsburg's catalog to make sure there was no conflict and that the Cutter number fell in correct alphabetical order and adjusted any portion of the classification and Cutter number as needed. Harris saved the records on the flash drive.

Table 4: BLOOMSBURG Spanish/Portuguese	
Number of copy records found by Mansfield*	174
Number of hours spent on project by Mansfield	49.75
* Mansfield selected 5 records thought to be better matches than records selected by Bloomsburg	

When Harris completed the above-listed materials before the allotted four weeks were up, the following additional materials were sent.

Spanish Gifts: Bloomsburg had not searched for records, nor created a file, nor provided a count. Harris created the file and followed the same instructions that Bloomsburg provided for Spanish/Portuguese Books as indicated above.

Table 5: BLOOMSBURG Spanish Gifts	
Number of copy records found by Mansfield	33
Number of original records created by Mansfield	3
Number of hours spent on project by Mansfield	8.25

Spanish MORE: Bloomsburg followed same procedure that had been followed for Spanish/Portuguese Books as indicated above. Harris followed the same instructions that Bloomsburg provided for Spanish/Portuguese Books as indicated above.

Table 6: BLOOMSBURG Spanish More	
Number of copy records found by Mansfield*	41
Number of original records created by Mansfield	1
Number of hours spent on project by Mansfield	9.5
* Mansfield selected 3 records thought to be better matches than records selected by Bloomsburg	

Spanish Final: Bloomsburg followed same procedure that had been followed for Spanish/Portuguese Books as indicated above. Harris followed the same instructions that Bloomsburg provided for Spanish/Portuguese Books as indicated above.

Table 7: BLOOMSBURG Spanish Final*	
Number of copy records found by Mansfield	53
Number of hours spent on project by Mansfield	10.25
* Bloomsburg sent 100 titles. Time allotted to project allowed only completion of 56; 44 titles were returned not completed.	

Quality

When Mansfield returned the materials, the two Coordinators met to develop quality assessment criteria. The following outline was agreed upon:

Assessment Outline

1. Check all original cataloging for:

    A. compliance with RDA, including:

        1. Presence of 336, 337, and 338 fields

        2. Use of 264 instead of 260

        3. FF coding of Desc: i

        4. Use of $e in 1xx and 7xx

        5. 040 $b eng $e rda

        6. Watch for records with 040 $e rda that are really hybrid records

    B. Validation of subject headings

    C. Review assigned subject headings

2. Series

    A. Check for and confirm past practice for use or non-use of series call nos.

    B. Confirm past tracing practice

    C. Confirm that authorized form in LCAF is appropriate for the 490

    D. Consult Virtual Authority File of records from foreign agencies as necessary

3. Microfiche

    A. Check consistency vis a vis previously cataloged titles in the series

As Hinchcliff reviewed the records and noted any changes she made, those not covered by the above assessment criteria nor covered by either the initial work specifications or subsequent emails were not counted for purposes of quality assessment

Quality assessment results by material category.

Mansfield uses the goal of an 80-85% accuracy rate for their annual Technical Services assessment. It was agreed to use this range as a goal for the pilot project as well. (See Table 8.)

Cost

The cost for Harris' work included gross pay of $2,545.74, shipping of $65.61, and reimbursement of $104.16 for transportation of the initial load of boxes to Mansfield's library. Since Harris was still actually a Mansfield employee, Bloomsburg did not need to provide benefits. It was learned after the fact that a procedure existed requiring only a signed document to allow an employee of one PASSHE university to do work for another. Corporate cataloging services pricing is provided only upon request and thus cannot be listed here for comparison. At least one service provides separate pricing for full copy or original cataloging as well as for merely assigning subject headings. Given the advantages resulting from geographical proximity, PASSHE contractual salary levels, and the non-provision of benefits, utilizing Harris rather than a corporate service was beneficial in terms of cost.

Table 8: Quality Assessment Results

	A Collection	B No. of items sent	C No. of items checked for project assessment purposes	D % of subjects that were valid	E % of subjects that were appropriate	F % of records receiving further work	G Call nos.: assignment, shelflisting	H Correct series call number handling	I Correct series tracing practice	J Correct series correlation with tracing	K RDA compliance	L Other accuracy points (e.g. typos, transcription)
1												
2												
3	Theses	47	47	100%	100%	3%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
4	Dept. papers	45	45	98%	100%	40%*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
5	German music microfiche	24	24	100%	100%	17%	NA	NA	100%	NA	NA	NA
6	Spanish/Portuguese		21 copy cat.	100%	100%	15%	100%	96%	100%	100%	NA	NA
7			4 original cataloging	100%	100%	25%	75%	NA	88%	100%	89%	85%
8												
9	*due to BU subject heading practice not specified in project guidelines											

Conclusion

Bloomsburg was quite pleased with the results of the pilot project. Materials that had been awaiting professional attention for some time—in some cases, years—were made available for patrons with high-quality cataloging at a reasonable cost. It is unlikely that the cataloging could have been accomplished even had Hinchcliff worked the additional four weeks herself, since issues requiring her attention in conjunction with her other duties would almost certainly have arisen. The project made clear that advance planning and clear understanding (on both sides) and explanation of expectations are essential. As word of the project was disseminated among the KLN libraries, 5 other libraries expressed interest in possible similar collaborative projects.

The project was scheduled for the summer weeks during which Harris was available to work. Hinchcliff was also available for email consultation during most of this period, so scheduling was not a problem. Harris was cognizant that she was in the employ of Bloomsburg University and thus limited her interactions with Mansfield personnel, so Mansfield demands for her time were not a scheduling issue.

For other organizations interested in pursuing such projects, the most important lesson learned must be to never assume. Cataloger's judgment is subjective, especially when making decisions about subject heading assignment. Even when using the same bibliographic utility or ILS, workflows vary from one institution to another. Project management is a must: the initiator should leave nothing out of the process outlined for those doing the cataloging. If certain steps are expected to be done or certain practices followed, these must be very clearly stated, even if they are considered standard cataloging practices. Time management is another must; each cataloging project has a contractual deadline which must be adhered to, so procrastination is not an option. Harris's advice to catalogers is to determine how many items can be cataloged per hour and keep to that target. This will help in meeting the deadline.

Harris and DiMarco subsequently developed pricing and workflow plans for projects that would be performed during the academic year by Harris as a Mansfield employee. They created the Mansfield University of Pennsylvania Library and Information Resources Division Technical Services Department (MATS) cataloging services business plan and submitted it to Mansfield University's administration. In December 2014, with the approval of Mansfield University's administration, the MATS cataloging services business plan was submitted to the PASSHE legal department. As of January 2015, DiMarco was given approval by PASSHE legal department to move forward with the business plan and cultivate partners among the other PASSHE institutions.

For future projects, the Mansfield University of Pennsylvania Library and Information Resources Division Technical Services Department (MATS) will be asking Partner libraries to complete a Letter of Understanding (LOU) which includes, but is not limited to, explanation of the services provided by MATS for the Partner library, responsibilities of the Partner library, and any costs associated with the service. The LOU sums up the terms and understanding of the contract which mostly has been negotiated up to this point in spoken or e-mail form between MATS and Partner Library staff. As MATS develops, subsequent projects will be scheduled during the academic year and become part of normal workflow.

The biggest hurdle in Mansfield's subsequent development of the MATS cataloging service was the paperwork required for the application process. Mansfield University's Library and Information Resources Division (LIRD) Director and Coordinator of Technical Services created a business plan and presented it to Mansfield University's administration. A suggested timeline was presented that included dates and actions to be completed by Mansfield University's administration. The LIRD Director had to "sell" the

MATS service to Mansfield University's President, Vice President of Finance & Administration, Purchasing Department, and various other departments. There was hesitancy from personnel in those departments because they had not previously been asked to participate in this kind of agreement.

MATS and Partner libraries will be assessing cost effectiveness as a key factor in determining success from an administrative standpoint in the future. One factor that will be considered is whether or not MATS work presents a better ROI than a commercial vendor. Another factor under consideration will be ease of contracting and use of a Letter of Understanding. From Mansfield University Administration's perspective, the revenue MATS generates will define success.

As of this writing, DiMarco and Harris have been contacted by three PASSHE institutions ready to use MATS cataloging services, and Bloomsburg is preparing the Letter of Understanding for additional projects for the 2014/2015 fiscal year.

Endnote

[1] Kate Harcourt and Jim LeBlanc, "Planning from the Middle Out: Phase 1 of 2CUL Technical Services Integration." *Collaborative Librarianship* 6, no.1 (2014): 36-41. http://collaborativelibrarianship.org/index.html