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Review of Biblios.net—Collaborative Cataloging

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Review of Biblios.net—Collaborative Cataloging

Keywords

Biblios.net, collaborative cataloging

Review of Biblios.net – Collaborative Cataloging

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Biblios.net is a free, web-based, open source cataloging productivity suite hosted by LibLime with a focus on collaborative cataloging. Anyone who creates an account with biblios.net can immediately start adding and sharing records which are freely licensed under the Open Data Commons (Liblime 2010). LibLime is a well-known open source provider; its most popular product, Koha, is used worldwide and in all types of libraries. The collaborative options in Biblios.net include shared cataloging, chat (not yet available at the time of this review), forums, and email.

The setup of biblios.net is simple. After creating an account (you have to install Google Gears for it to run), you can immediately click on “start cataloging” to add records. There are instructions in the overview section of the product, and available resources include several forum topics such as Cataloging 101, Advanced Cataloging Topics, Known Issues, and Paid Support Options.

Biblios.net has created several cataloging templates for getting started which are based on MARC21 material types: new book, new sound recording, new computer file, new continuing resource, and new visual material. Other features include authority control, a guided editors feature that helps you fill out the control fields with pull down options, and a context-sensitive help feature for MARC21 subfields to help the new cataloger decide what information to put in the record.

Since this is an open source product, you can export records into your catalog simply by clicking the export button and saving the file to your computer. You may also export records singly or in batches directly to your ILS. To do this, you send the record to the ILS already in the biblios.net system, mean-

ing that you would have to set up your ILS in biblios in order to send records in batch. Doing so is fairly simple; under the “options” tab you click “send new targets,” then “add send targets.” From here you can input the URL of your catalog or any catalog to which you’d like to add records. Once the ILS data is entered you click “test connection” to make sure you can connect from biblios.net to the intended ILS.

While the forums could be a central and beneficial collaborative feature, at the time of this writing the postings were spotty at best with the most being in the “Getting Started” and “General Discussion” groups. Forum topics that would be extremely helpful for new biblios users and new catalogers in general barely had any posts and oftentimes questions posted went unanswered

Biblios.net enhances and promotes collaboration by facilitating the sharing of more than thirty million records (Peters 2009) and by providing forums where catalogers can share their expertise. The collaborative cataloging in biblios.net has the potential to be of particular benefit to smaller libraries since they can grab records as needed without a subscription, and those small libraries, in turn, can provide access to their collections that would otherwise go unnoticed or be unavailable. The shared catalog is an old and widely-used form of library collaboration, and biblios.net continues that tradition.

Works Cited

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