

Managing Vendor Records for Monographic E-Collections at a Medium-Sized Academic Library

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rapid growth of electronic resources continues to challenge traditional methods of cataloging library collections, forcing a cataloging department to reevaluate its policies and procedures and implement changes. This chapter presents a case study of integrating vendor-supplied bibliographic records into a library catalog in order to provide timely and accurate catalog access to the library digital collections. The chapter discusses the benefits, issues, and challenges of batch manipulating and loading large record sets for these e-resources supplied by their vendors. It also describes the strategies and tools the bibliographic services staff has employed to solve the identified problems and improve the process. Further, it examines the effectiveness of the current e-record management policies and procedures. The chapter concludes with recommendation of solutions and a quest for future best practices in managing vendor-supplied records for e-resources.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

This case study was conducted at a university library in Pennsylvania, United States. Founded towards the end of 19th century, the institution has grown from a normal school into the region's premier public residential university, with a current student population of 9,000 and faculty of 400. Committed to intellectual development, leadership, and civic responsibility, the university offers comprehensive undergraduate and selective graduate programs. The university library was established in the late 1930s, expanded in 1960s and 1970s when its current facility was built. Today, the library houses over 500,000 volumes of print and audiovisual materials and approximately 250,000 titles of licensed online resources. Led by the director, the library has 90 employees: eight librarians, 12 support staff, and approximately 70 student workers.

The library online catalog provides access to all library collections, both in physical and electronic formats. The bibliographic services unit, consisting of one librarian, two support staff, and two student assistants, is responsible for cataloging and classifying newly acquired library materials in all formats, at an annual total of 5,000-7,000 physical items, updating the library holdings, and conducting database maintenance projects. The bibliographic services librarian, as head of the unit and professional cataloger, oversees the library catalog, performs original cataloging, and develops projects and procedures to ensure the quality of the catalog.¹ In addition, the bibliographic services librarian is chiefly responsible for cataloging and catalog management of all electronic resources the library acquires. The mission of the bibliographic services unit is to provide accurate, convenient, and timely access to the library collections in all types and formats.

SETTING THE STAGE

Like many other academic libraries in the nation, the library has been evolving from primarily the domain of the book to providing pathways to high-quality information in a variety of media and information sources. In order to make itself an integral part of the academic learning and research process, the library continues to adjust to a changing education and information environment by assessing new information needs and behaviors of the campus community and customizing the library resources and services. While continuing to conduct collection assessment and cost analysis, the librarians made a strategic decision to support distance learning by transitioning most of the library collections from print to online. In 2000, the library purchased about 5,000 electronic books from NetLibrary. In 2002 and 2003, the library purchased 6,000 more electronic books from the same vendor. These

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