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# TECHKNOW

A Quarterly Review of Bright Ideas  
For the Technical Services Division

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## Joining Together to Recycle Library Discards and E-Waste

by Miriam Kahn, MLS, MA, MBK Consulting, Columbus, OH, and Adjunct  
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In the April 2006 issue of *TechKNOW*, Michele Hurst Juszczyk wrote about Better World Books, a company that collects and sells unwanted library books to fund literacy initiatives ([http://www.library.kent.edu/files/TechKNOW\\_April\\_2006.pdf](http://www.library.kent.edu/files/TechKNOW_April_2006.pdf)). The article focused on one of a host of options for our over-flowing shelves and bulging Friends of the Library sale tables. Three years later the problem of excess books still plagues libraries. What do we do with books that the resale organizations do not want? Colorful highlighting, excessive underlining, damaged bindings, moldy pages, and out of date texts fill our discard shelves. What do we do with this ever-increasing group of books?

Government statistics show that waste is growing at an astounding rate and that the amount of recycling waste collected and destroyed increases every year. According to The Statistical Abstract of the United States 2009, paper waste is the largest category of recyclable waste. In 1980, the United States generated 55.2 million pounds of paper waste (11.7 million was recycled). By 2006 that number grew to 85.3 million pounds (44 million was recovered and recycled). Other recyclable wastes are growing at a slower and equally steady rate. For more information, visit Tables 361-363 at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/09statab/geo.pdf>.

2009 is a year for facing realities and responsibilities. Budgets continue to decrease, physical space is at a premium, and libraries are fast becoming information centers full of computers and digital resources. Librarians face the task of weeding collections, selectively accessioning donations, and wrestling with new missions and identities. We weed collections based upon mission statements, collection development policies, and the holdings of other consortia members. We replace print with electronic resources, as is the case for many of our carefully collected and guarded government documents. Most of all, we struggle with the need to be socially responsible. When books no longer fit on the shelf and we cringe to consider dumpsters and incinerators, technical services and collection development librarians look to other options.

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Recycling is the responsible answer. Recycling bins are ubiquitous in offices and public places. Bins for plastic and glass bottles, soda cans, newspapers, and office paper abound. Municipalities arrange for recycling centers and local pickup for homeowners and small businesses and libraries contract for trash and waste collection and basic recycling. That is the easy part. So much more than this is recyclable: ink cartridges, cardboard, electronic equipment, and, of course, unwanted, unsellable books. What do we do with all this waste? How do we manage its distribution? This is the difficult part of the recycling equation.

### **Recycling Books**

When it comes to recycling books, we have three choices. The first, and most familiar solution, is to sell them locally to our patrons to read, cherish, and share. Many libraries already profit from the contributions of their Friends of the Libraries sales.

Secondly, we can sell them or give them to book reselling organizations like Better World Books (<http://www.betterworldbooks.com/>). Recently a variety of organizations have sprung up that are devoted to the re-distribution of books. With some of these book resellers the libraries pay the shipping costs. With others, the companies pay the shipping costs. Some of the resellers also share in the profits, or give money to charities, but in other cases libraries just get rid of unwanted books at little or no cost. We-Buy-Books collects and resells science and technology books (<http://www.we-buy-books.com/>). B-Logistics (<http://www.blogistics.com>) collects new and used

books and media products, including CDs and DVDs in original packaging or sturdy packaging with liner notes (based upon their selection criteria) which they post on their site for 3-5 months. The net profits are split 50/50. B-Logistics arranges for pickup, and splits the shipping costs with the library. Like Better World Books, unsold books and media are given to Global Education Fund (<http://www.globaleducationfund.org/index.php>) which distributes books to orphanages and villages throughout third world countries to establish libraries. Unsold and undistributed materials are recycled as paper and insulation.

*What do we do with all this waste? How do we manage its distribution? This is the difficult part of the recycling equation.*

Libraries' third option is to recycle books so they do not end up in landfills. Often libraries may recycle books as they do office paper. Generally, paperback books are easier to recycle than hardback books. Some companies recycle

hardback books whole, some require that the buckram covers be removed and still others have difficulties processing the spine adhesives. Recyclers must also adhere to local environmental regulations. Ask the recycling company and your local government for information regarding book recycling.

There are also a few companies that recycle bound books into a new product. One such company is Book-Destruction (<http://www.book-destruction.com/>). Their automated plant grinds up bound materials into cellulose that is sold to companies that make insulation, paper toweling,

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and roofing materials. But, and here's the big but, they only collect by the tractor trailer load, and that's 40,000 pounds. So how do we take advantage of this fantastic recycling opportunity? One option is to work in cooperation with our library consortia or other local organizations to collect and store the books until there are enough to call for a pickup. If these logistics are too costly or too cumbersome, another option is to contact one of their partner companies, such as Green Earth Book Recyclers (<http://www.greenearthbookrecyclers.com/>) which collects books from campus bookstores for resale and destruction. What Green Earth Book Recyclers cannot resell, they have destroyed by Book-Destruction. Libraries could consider contacting a local campus bookstore and asking for a collection box. It really should be obvious that to recycle books completely, we have to work together through consortia to make certain that materials are collected for destruction not landfill.

### ***Recycling Audio Visual and Electronic Materials***

Bound materials are not the only collections libraries discard. Damaged CDs, DVDs, diskettes

and other storage devices also accumulate and need to be destroyed responsibly. The same is true of all types of electronic and computer equipment. Ink and toner cartridges are recyclable. Everything from cell phones and damaged iPods, keyboards, cords, motherboards, CPUs and monitors can be recycled. Do we recycle them for resale or for destruction? The end result depends upon the company that collects the discarded items.

Several types of e-waste are problematic, and therefore they cannot be included in traditional recycling waste. CRT monitors and televisions are considered hazardous waste, so a certified recycling company must pick up the items and destroy them according to EPA regulations.

All magnetic media are problematic because they contain proprietary information that can affect the security of your organization or your own credit history. The company that picks up magnetic media must certify that the information has been destroyed before the physical object is resold, or that company must certify that the object has been physically destroyed. The National Association for Information Destruction (NAID®) "...is the international trade association for companies providing information destruction services." Their organization provides guidelines for destruction of information and for certification of information destruction. Their Web site contains a list of companies that destroy print and computer data, hardware and software (<http://www.naidonline.org/>).

One company that recycles small electronic and computer trash or e-waste is GreenDisk (<http://www.greendisk.com>). GreenDisk is a recycling company that provides boxes for collecting electronic and computer trash. You purchase the TechnoTrash Can, or use one of your own. The purchase price of the container includes shipping to the company. GreenDisk will take any type of e-waste. They degauss all electric media so hard drives, diskettes, chips, and zip drives are recycled without any information on them, thus preventing data theft. They also process PDAs and cell phones. CDs and DVDs are shredded. They take computer components, toner, even cords. The hardware is recycled or destroyed.

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Save the  
Date: OLC  
Convention  
and Expo to  
*Revisit the  
Book* on October 21-23, 2009



We select, acquire, catalog, read and refer to them. We BOOKmark Web PAGES. We read them in print, online, in downloaded format, or listen to them. Through it all, books remain at the heart of what we do and what we as librarians love about libraries. OLC's 2009 Convention is revisiting the book. Visit <http://www.ollc.org/ConventionAndExpo.asp> for the latest information on this conference.

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GreenDisk also sells recycled discs and CD/DVD cases.

### **Recommendations**

There are companies that collect our bound discards and e-waste to recycle, reuse, refurbish, and destroy. There are companies that collect unwanted materials to resell and donate to charitable causes. We can continue to send bound materials and old CDs and DVDs to resellers for a

small profit and great social benefit. And we should avail ourselves of all these opportunities.

To recycle for destruction of bound materials and e-waste, we must work together to help recycling and destruction companies remain profitable. That may mean picking up large loads or assuming the cost to ship to their collection points. To make recycling a responsible, profitable activity, we must join together within our cooperatives and consortia, and join with our municipalities and communities to collect and store materials for destruction in bulk. Only then will we all benefit by our drive to be socially and environmentally responsible.

## New ALA ALCTS Public Libraries Technical Services Interest Group Holds Inaugural Meeting in Chicago

*by Cynthia Whitacre, OCLC*

The brand new ALA Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) Public Libraries Technical Services Interest Group will be meeting for the very first time at ALA Annual in Chicago. The group is formally charged with providing a forum for the discussion of technical services issues in public libraries, particularly those unique to public library operations, with the aim to encourage discussion of all aspects of technical services activities and to include all levels of technical services staff within public libraries.

The idea for this group arose in a meeting of the ALCTS Implementation Task Group on the LC Working Group at Midwinter in Denver. We were talking about how there were a number of Interest Groups in ALCTS that focused on academic Libraries, but none for public libraries. Then, the brainstorm hit: we could change this by putting forward a petition for a ALCTS new interest group! Marlene Harris agreed to serve as the first chair of the group (through Annual 2010), and Cynthia Whitacre, as the current temporary Vice-Chair. We were delighted when a group of ALCTS members stepped forward to sign the petition and the

ALCTS Board acted swiftly to approve the group.

The first meeting will be from 8:00-10:00 AM on Saturday, July 11 in the Chicago Hilton Northwest 1 Room. The first discussion topic will be identifying what differentiates public library technical services from technical services operations in other types of libraries. Marlene Harris, Alachua County Library District, will moderate the discussion. A representative of Quality Books will discuss how their cataloging and processing operation provides services to public libraries that differ from other types of libraries. All attending are invited to participate in the discussion. Organizational topics will be covered for the new interest group, and a new Vice-Chair will be elected. The Vice-Chair will become the chair following the 2010 ALA Annual meeting. Program ideas and discussion topics for future meetings will be solicited. We also hope to launch active virtual participation on ALA Connect space following ALA Annual. All public librarians and others who are interested in public library technical services are enthusiastically invited to be part of this interest group.

# Coordinator's Corner

*By Andrea Christman, Dayton Metro Library  
Technical Services Division Coordinator*

Summer is my favorite time of year for many reasons, most of which have nothing to do with work! However, it's also a perfect time to look at what the Technical Services (TS) Division of the Ohio Library Council (OLC) has done so far this year, as well as what lies ahead for us.

Looking back on the first half of the year, the TS Division has been quite busy. We offered several programs at the spring chapter conferences as well as a full-day workshop on the MarcEdit software. We would like to thank OLC and OHIONET for making it possible to bring Terry Reese, the developer of MarcEdit, from Oregon State to conduct the session. Over 50 people attended!

The Action Council is hard at work preparing for upcoming events. If you attend the OLC biennial convention, be sure to say hello to us at our table at the Expo! The Task Force on Mohican met in March to discuss having another technical services retreat. This has come to be a biennial event, held at Mohican State Park in the spring. It is tentatively scheduled for March of 2010. We're working on the programs and will continue to develop them over the next few months.

The Action Council will begin to formulate ideas for programs to be offered at the next round of chapter conferences (spring of 2010) at a meeting in July. You may wonder how we develop these programs. First, we usually send out an email to all members of the TS Division asking for input. We take any responses to our planning meeting. At that meeting, we consider these ideas (and we're always ever so grateful for any ideas you send to us!) and brainstorm for others. We try to focus on new trends, hot topics, and anything we think might be of interest to those attending the chapter conferences. We also consider whether or not we will be able to find someone to present on the given topics. We whittle down the list, go back to our respective libraries, and begin to locate prospective presenters. We fill out paperwork and submit these proposals to the OLC offices, who then distribute them to the Chapter Action Councils.

It is the Chapter Action Councils (North, Northwest, South, Southeast, Central) that decide the programs that will be offered at their respective conferences. Of course, we always hope that all of the programs that we propose will be offered at all of the Chapter conferences!

We've heard repeatedly that people want to see more technical services programs at OLC events. At the same time, we would love to increase the attendance of TS Division members at these functions. These two goals go hand in hand: the more technical services people there are in attendance, the more technical services programs there will (hopefully) be offered! In addition to your continued presence at technical services programs, you can help us get more technical services programs on the chapter conference schedules by continuing to ask the Chapter Action Councils for technical services programs. To that end, if there is anything that the TS Division Action Council can do to make our activities more relevant to your work, please send me (mailto:[AChristman@daytonmetrolibrary.org](mailto:AChristman@daytonmetrolibrary.org)) or anyone else on the TS Division Action Council (mailto:[http://olc.org/TechnicalServices.asp](mailto:http://olc.org/TechnicalServices.asp)) an email. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Three Catalogers Walk Into a Blog <http://3catalogers.wordpress.com/>

This promising new blog helps catalogers solve challenges by providing access to mostly online cataloging resources. Maintained by Richard Stewart, Jennifer B. Young and Joy Anhalt, this blog therefore has input from catalogers working in both public and academic libraries. Started in September of last year, the blog is still young and somewhat sparse. But the resources highlighted so far reveal a quirky off-beat take on the traditional. OCLC's Terminologies Service is discussed, and so is Xerox's Language Identifier site. The site descriptions are concise, authoritative and playful. Let's hope it continues. Check it out!

# MarcEdit: A Powerful Program

*by Roger M. Miller, Cataloging Services Department Manager  
Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County*

The Ohio Library Council (OLC) Technical Services Division Action Council lists among its goals a commitment to offer continuing education opportunities, including programs for OLC chapter conferences, the biennial convention, and last year's Technical Services retreat at Mohican State Park. These continuing education programs are presented on a regular, ongoing basis, but a different type of program was offered on May 20 when the Ohio Library Council and OHIONET cosponsored *MarcEdit, a Cataloger's Best Friend: Learning to Streamline Metadata with MarcEdit*. The idea for this program, which featured MarcEdit author/programmer Terry Reese, has been kicked around by the Action Council for at least a couple of years, and the program and response exceeded all expectations.

The program was introduced by Evan Struble (OHIONET Community Manager) and Chris Korenowsky (OLC Professional Development Director). Chris kept his introduction of Terry Reese very short, remarking that one of the attendees informed him that Reese needs no introduction due to his status as a "rock star" in the world of cataloging! Reese holds the Gray Family Chair for Innovative Library Services at Oregon State University. He created MarcEdit for his own use in 1999 and began using it in his work at Oregon State



*Chris Korenowsky, Evan Struble and Terry Reese*

University in June 2000. Terry eventually made the program available at no cost and now nearly 10 years later MarcEdit is used throughout the world.

The all-day workshop was offered at OHIONET headquarters in Columbus, Ohio and attendance was capped at 53 participants. About two-thirds of those in the audience came from university libraries and the rest were from public, institutional, and school libraries. As might be expected, most of the attendees were from Ohio but one person drove in from Lexington, KY and another from Edinboro, PA.

Reese is in great demand as a speaker but apparently his MarcEdit presentations are generally hands-on in nature; the number of attendees at this program dictated more of a straight lecture approach, which Reese handled admirably. The morning session provided background on MarcEdit as well as instructions for installing and configuring the software. The software's "preview mode" was demonstrated, helping to clarify how a user can configure and utilize the preview mode to speed up working with very large files. Reese spoke at some length about his process for updating the MarcEdit software, including the extent to which he entertains ideas for changes to the program that are submitted through e-mail. He also pointed out that several "how-to" videos are now available on YouTube ([http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_type=&search\\_query=MarcEdit&aq=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_type=&search_query=MarcEdit&aq=f)), which was a relief to learn because the program is so rich in functionality that covering everything fully would have been impossible at the training event. Topics completed before the lunch break included using MARC tools, MARC character conversions, using batch record processing, exporting data, crosswalks, and using the MarcEdit delimited text translator.

The afternoon session explored in depth the functionality of the MARC editor. Global editing of

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fields, subfields, and indicators was covered, in addition to swapping fields, deduplicating and sorting records, and using MarcEdit's Z39.50 client. Reese also demonstrated the software's built-in OAI harvester as well as some new plug-ins that are included in the current version of MarcEdit. Before the program ended Reese went on to discuss MarcEdit ancillary tools, including tools for splitting and joining files, the MARCValidator, and Link Checker. These tools, which also include a script-maker, are well worth exploring.

Program attendees responded very enthusiastically to Mr. Reese throughout the daylong event.

Evan Struble remarked, "The evaluations for the MarcEdit [program] were extremely strong and positive in nature; it seemed that people enjoyed their time at the workshop and found it to be valuable ... [we] would be happy to do it again in the future!"

MarcEdit is a wonderful program that is widely used throughout libraries throughout the world. If your library hasn't already taken a look at MarcEdit, it certainly should. More information about Terry Reese and MarcEdit (as well as a link to various free downloads) is available at <http://oregonstate.edu/~reaset/marcedit/html/index.php>.

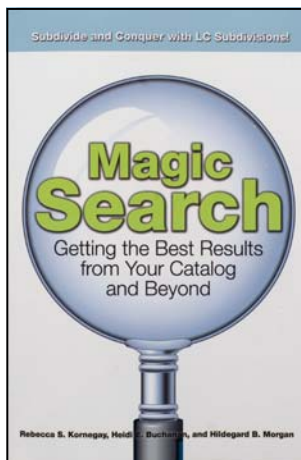
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Rebecca S. Kornegay, Heidi E. Buchanan, and Hildegard B. Morgan. *Magic Search: Getting the Best Results from Your Catalog and Beyond*. Chicago: ALA, 2009. 143 p. ISBN: 978-0-8389-0990-4. \$40.50 for ALA members, \$45.00 for nonmembers

*Magic Search* is an easily accessible book on Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) *subdivisions*. That's right—subdivisions. This easy to use ready-reference tool maximizes search returns via subject keyword searching. By following the authors' recommendations and example search structures it is possible to much more fully exploit the search power inherent in the LCSH subdivisions.

The authors included only the subject subdivisions that they considered to be the best-performing during searches. They present an upbeat, free-wheeling and entertaining book that is thoroughly grounded in the authors' knowledge of LCSH. Because they know the rules, we don't have to. Rules are only included when their misinterpretation can skew search results. Tips and search hints are included that can impact searching in traditional library catalogs, faceted catalogs, WorldCat and Google Book Search.

Organized for ease of access, the book's structure supports its active use mid-search. The first eleven chapters provide assistance with searches



by formats, special treatments of topics or certain kinds of information that cross disciplines. Each entry includes the name of the subdivision, a definition or description and example searches. There are also chapters that recommend subdivisions for subject specific searches. The book concludes with a bibliography and an index.

Rebecca Kornegay and Heidi Buchanan are reference librarians at Western Carolina University's Hunter Library, in Cullowhee, North Carolina.

Hildegard Morgan has thirty years of cataloging experience and also serves at Hunter's reference desk. These experienced coauthors also wrote *Library Journal's* 2005 article, "Amazing Magical Searches!," that formed the basis for this book.

Buy this book. Buy this book and add it to the ready reference collection. Buy this book, add it to the ready reference collection and bribe the reference librarians into reading it. And don't forget to place it near public workstations for quick reference by patrons.

# Social Tagging, Folksonomies and Controlled Vocabularies—Can't They Just be Friends?

By Margaret Beecher Maurer, Head, Catalog & Metadata, Kent State University Libraries

In information seeking, whether on the Web or in the catalog, we have the capacity to enhance access and identification. Access and identification systems may be controlled by librarians or other experts, as with controlled vocabularies. Alternately, they may be dynamically generated by users. By “dynamically generated” I mean that the terms within them are created on-the-fly at the point of need, rather than being previously defined and only then assigned. When someone assigns a tag to a resource, it is called *tagging*, or sometimes *social tagging*. When those tags are compiled together they create *folksonomies*, something that has generated a lot of buzz in libraries.

Controlled or uncontrolled access systems may be created by different kinds of people, and for different purposes, but they're all access systems and they're all created from thoughts and ideas. There are differences and similarities between controlled vocabularies and social tagging. In this article I plan on discussing some of them. But my real goal is to contextualize social tagging and folksonomies in order to improve our understanding. Some of the work being done today with folksonomies and social tagging is absolutely fascinating, and for me, just plain fun.

## Controlled Vocabularies

Catalogers are more familiar with controlled vocabularies than social tagging and folksonomies, because controlled vocabularies form the bedrock of much of our work. Library of Congress Subject Headings and The National Name Authority File are classic examples of controlled vocabularies. Taxonomies used to organize Web pages are often controlled vocabularies.

As pointed out by Jonathan Rochkind, controlled vocabularies serve as connections between the words used by the searcher, and the words used by the author. When they work well they improve search precision and recall. They do this because they are based on the concept of gathering information around an agreed-upon *authorized* heading. This is an important difference between controlled vocabularies and uncontrolled vocabularies. For controlled vocabularies, someone decides what terms will be used to describe a group of ideas or objects. Currently only people can do this work, and it is time-consuming and costly.

Controlled or uncontrolled access systems may be created by different kinds of people, and for different purposes, but they're all access systems and they're all created from thoughts and ideas.

But without authority control, and especially in the absence of a syndetic structure (cross-references) the burden is placed on the users to figure out *all* the terms that might be used to describe the re-

source. Controlled vocabularies that provide links from the non-standardized form of the heading to the standardized form of the heading often do so through the use of authority records, and cross-references, which help guide the searcher.

Controlled vocabularies promote discovery, in particular, when the *aboutness* of something has nothing to do with the words in the resource or its representation. This is especially true for the humanities and for imaginative literature. For example, an entire resource can be about loneliness, or love, or grief, and those words may not even appear in the full text, let alone in the title. Professionally mediated access definitely benefits these resources.

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Another thing that controlled vocabularies do is to support displays that connect related resources. Faceted catalogs benefit from controlled vocabularies, as do pre-coordinated displays, and even tag clouds. Controlled vocabularies can map relationships between resources, even when the searcher does not know the best terms to start from because they work well in concert with keyword searches—particularly if the catalog is set up to search the cross-references. By researching in this way searchers can stumble into the structure that facilitates their search.

Also, it seems to me that once data structures attain a certain size, it becomes more problematic to differentiate between different authors and subjects. Depending on how homogeneous the data is, what the requirements are for specificity within the data community and the computing power required, eventually most communities attain some sort of tipping point that causes them to exert some efforts to differentiate the terms as used. By this I mean, to provide distinctions between the different meanings that a term can have. Wikipedia uses the term *disambiguate* to describe this function.

Ironically, controlled vocabularies weaknesses often result from the very fact that they are controlled. The real truth is that the terms the catalogers or other experts choose may not be the terms that a searcher would chose. Therefore, searchers must learn something about how to search, and the more unsophisticated the community is that is using the controlled vocabulary, the harder they will find this to be. Clay Shirkey, writing in *Ontology is Overrated*, states that the act of creating the list of authorized headings is no longer needed in a linked world, and indeed may become a barrier.

### **Social Tagging**

A *tag* is a term associated with or assigned to something that can be used to describe the item or to provide access. Tags enable keyword-based classification and search of information. When a tag is assigned to an item a way is created to find it through browsing. For catalogers, tagging is

similar to applying subject headings, except that the taggers are not necessarily working from a list of pre-defined tags. Tags are used on Web sites, in email organization systems and in social networking sites. Tagging is popular, according to Rashmi Sinha, because it is easy and enjoyable, has a low cognitive cost, is quick to do and provides self and social feedback immediately.

Don't confuse tags with keywords or full-text searching. Keywords are not assigned by a human being. A machine locates the terms and utilizes mathematical algorithms to determine relevancy. Keywords often operate behind the scenes and are not necessarily visibly aggregated. Keywords also can not necessarily be hyper-linked. Tags can.

A tag can describe the subject matter for the item being tagged, but it can also describe where the item is located. It can reference the intended use of the item. It can also be an extremely individual reference that has little meaning to others. Unlike controlled vocabularies, tagging systems allow for and even encourage differences within the same system. They are less predictable in terms of the ordering of the terms, and the terms that will be used.

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## **WorldCat Cataloging Partners Discussion List**

Because of their transition from PromptCat to WorldCat Cataloging Partners, OCLC is shifting all PromptCat discussion list members to the new OCLC-WCAT-PARTNERS-L discussion list. This new discussion forum has been created for libraries, library material vendors, OCLC and other interested parties of WorldCat Cataloging Partners. WorldCat Cataloging Partners is OCLC's collaboration with materials vendors to deliver OCLC MARC records that match the materials ordered through participating vendor partners. This service merges the former PromptCat and the Cataloging Partners Program. Anyone interested in joining the OCLC-WCAT-PARTNERS-L discussion list or other OCLC discussion lists, may use the form at <https://www3.oclc.org/app/listserv/index.pl>.

## Just Visiting

They took my name,  
gave me a once-over  
as I passed through  
gates and gazes, anticipating.  
I saw fences surrounding me,  
razor wire curled in endless rounds,  
secured, up and away, the  
sun glimmering against sharp  
points, like shining eyes, watching.  
Cold steel and stone  
bounced the sound of my voice  
back to me as frail echoes,  
fractured tones.  
Icy needles stung my flesh as a wind  
whipped around the white-washed  
campus. Dark-barred windows  
reflected broken images  
of my peers and I as we  
shuffled along the sidewalk,  
and then we were there,  
passing through a doorway, into  
familiarity with a twist of freedom  
under rules, caution and submission.  
I read spines falling against spines  
on the prison library shelves  
as thoughts of crisp white paperbacks  
dug their heels into my brain.  
A loud bell sounded to mark the hour  
breaking my silent browse,  
jarring my thoughts. I shivered,  
suddenly wishing for freedom  
beyond the chain-link fence.  
I glanced to the doorway, pondering  
the years spent coming and going,  
working within the walls of confinement,  
cataloging, shelving, serving in a stark  
environment. In my heart, I applauded  
the dedication of one prison librarian who,  
himself, seemed so delighted to share  
the uniqueness of his vocation.

By Jennifer Bull

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Tagging works best in an environment where taggers have ownership over their tags because this encourages them to tag. Taggers are also more likely to tag their own stuff than they are to tag someone else's stuff. "You can't get your customers to organize your products unless you give them a very good incentive," according to Tim Spalding. "We all make our own beds, but nobody volunteers to fluff pillows at the local Sheraton." Spalding believes that most tagging only happens after the tagger has consumed the information. He points out that a book must be read before it can be tagged, which would require the reader to revisit the metadata just to augment it in the catalog. "To be honest, I don't think I'm likely to go to the library Web site after the fact and enter tags." But people do enter tags into Spalding's Library-Thing—tags to describe their own library collections.

While this may seem like a big difference between controlled vocabularies and social tagging, it is not the biggest one. Social tags do one other thing really well: they connect together individuals that are interested in the same things because they function as links. Controlled vocabularies can not do this. Mejiias states that "...the social value of tags is that they allow you to track a particular tag, to track a particular user, to track social groups, and to track trends."

### Folksonomies

Remember that all tagging happens within a system, and that the system defines the tagging, whether this is explicit on the surface or not. And often that system produces a list of the tags that have been applied. These lists have come to be known as a folksonomies, and have been referred to as "emergent grassroots taxonomies."

Within a folksonomy metadata is not necessarily only generated by metadata experts. It is also generated by the creators of the resources, and by the consumers of the resources. This can provide for a variety of perspectives, for good or for bad, about each resource. David Weinberger points out that while an author is an authority on the intended meaning for a work, they can not predict

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what it will mean to others. Weinberger goes on to say that "...when it comes to searching, what a work means to a searcher is far more important than the author's intention."

Folksonomies respond much more quickly to changes in the language used by a community because there is no professional mediation. This makes them very useful when access is being provided to dynamic information, such as RSS feeds or blogs. Guy and Tonkin remarked in a fascinating article in DLib that "A folksonomy merges, di-

verges, and evolves much the way language does, through usage and interaction." This is one of folksonomies' greatest strengths.

Folksonomies also directly reflect the personal vocabulary of their users, including diction, terminology and precision. Guy and Tonkin believe that "...users are willing to tolerate the shortcomings of folksonomies because ultimately they lower the barriers to cooperation." They go on to say that

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## SERIES-L: A New Tool for Cooperative Quality Control

*by Ian Fairclough, George Mason University (Fairfax, Va.)*

Series are a well known challenge for catalogers. And with the Library of Congress' termination of the practice of providing series access, some may consider the provision of series access to be passé. Furthermore, series tend to be underestimated by library staff and patrons alike, who may be unaware of the extent to which they depend on materials in series to fulfill users' requirements.

Evidently this view is not held by all, and hence the level of interest in SERIES-L, a new tool for cooperative quality control. Thanks to co-list owners Wayne Sanders and Kathleen Schweitzberger at the University of Missouri the SERIES-L list commenced operations on March 24, 2009.

Library patrons and librarians (particularly reference staff and developers of collections) can deal with series properly only when they are correctly cataloged. This requires that the bibliographic record for individual series members reflects the relationship to the series in the description and provides appropriate access. Using SERIES-L, catalogers can share information that they've discovered about series access, problems they've resolved, and other matters. By bringing these concerns to people's attention, we can promote standards of quality within individual series that otherwise might be overlooked.

So far, approximately 300 people have signed up to receive SERIES-L. Each message goes out with a notice at the end (in Listserv® parlance, a bottom banner) declaring that the list is "a forum for those concerned enough to take action to improve the quality of bibliographic records for library materials issued in series."

The usefulness of SERIES-L was immediately evident in the first several posts to the list. Veteran list contributors Roger Miller (a co-owner of PERSNAME-L) and Bryan Baldus (well known for his posts on the DEWEYERROR list) immediately sent lists of headings for children's and young adult series to SERIES-L. In response, Joan Condell of Dallas Public Library wrote, "I work at a public library, and series, especially kids/YA series, are very important to the public services librarians. ... I found a lot of series that needed controlling."

All *TechKNOW* readers should consider signing up for SERIES-L! To do so, send an e-mail to [LISTSERV@PO.MISSOURI.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@PO.MISSOURI.EDU) with the text "SUBSCRIBE SERIES-L, [yourforename] [yoursurname]." Or visit <https://po.missouri.edu/cgi-bin/wa?AO=SERIES-L>, which also provides access to the Series-L archives.

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"In formal categorization there is a correct answer or term, implying necessarily that there is also a much larger set of incorrect answers. In tagging there is a very large group of correct answers—short of intentional abuse, it is doubtful as to whether any incorrect answers exist at all."

There is also some evidence that given a minimum number of tags in an information environment, people appear to begin to assign already assigned tags in a collective way. In other words, they come to some common, community-defined consensus on relevant terms. Evidence is suggesting that they actually begin to change the way they label things based on how other people are labeling them. And, according to Mathes, the more visible the tags are, the more likely they are to be used by others.

But the downside of non-expert analysis, of course, is that the door is opened for all kinds of interpretations. There are issues with the meanings of terms. There is an overall lack of clarity because terms can be ambiguous and words can have multiple meanings. There is no synonym control. Because each tag is selected in isolation the specificity can vary. There are also issues with structural inconsistencies and redundant headings, often caused by the presence of both the singular and the plural forms of words.

Tags and their consequent folksonomies are the product of the community that created them, and the nature of that community therefore defines them. How do we deal with conflicting cultural norms? Danah Boyd has commented that "It's important to remember that this is really about perspective and culture, without which accuracy lacks meaning." "Describing things well is hard, and often context specific." Folksonomies can also open the door to opinion tags. For example, a racist individual could attach pejorative tags to items.

## **Recommendations**

Don't assume that controlled vocabularies are always the best answer in every information system. Conversely, don't look to social tagging systems and folksonomies as a cheap replacement for expert information mediation. I agree with recent

OhioLINK recommendations that OhioLINK should seek to utilize both controlled vocabularies and user-supplied tags in the MARC and in the non-MARC environments expressed through the adoption of content standards and controlled vocabularies.

Controlled vocabularies and folksonomies are not necessarily mutually exclusive and in opposition to each other. Librarians could have a role to play in tag organization. Tagging systems could influence controlled vocabulary structures. Listen to Jessamyn West when she says: "Allowing users to tell a system what method of finding digital content works for them is a good start to having a truly interactive and responsive library system."

When you invite folksonomies into the catalog, do so strategically and carefully. Linking tag systems to the bibliographic records appears to be common practice, rather than adding the terms to the bibliographic record. However, if your ILS has the capacity to store user-supplied tags, and your system stores the tags in the bibliographic records, be sure you find a way to isolate them from the indexes for the controlled vocabularies. Also be sure to include them in keyword search indexes.

Delaying the implementation of a user-supplied tag in the catalog until it has been vetted by staff might be a good idea. This practice will remove some of the immediate gratification inherent in tagging, but it will also protect your library. The Cleveland Museum of Art has done this with contributions to the Steve Museum Social Tagging Project.

Be aware that the terms grown from the crowd may not really be the best. As one researcher noted, "I don't want to toss out folksonomies, but I also don't want to toss out controlled vocabularies, or expert assignment of categories. I just don't believe that all expertise can be replicated through repeated and amplified non-expert input."

David Batty has remarked that "There is a burden of effort in information storage and retrieval that may be shifted from shoulder to shoulder, from author to indexer, to index language designer, to searcher, to user. It may even be shared in different proportions. But it will not go away."

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I also recommend that you always remember why people tag, and how that impacts tagging volume. If we are going to allow social tagging in the MARC and in the non-MARC environments in our libraries, and by extrapolation folksonomic structures, then we need to find and apply incentives for people to tag.

Finally, I recommend that controlled vocabularies could be better utilized than they currently are. Examples of projects that are expanding the visi-

bility of controlled vocabularies include the National Library of Australia's People Australia project, linkages created between the German personal name file and the German Wikipedia, OCLC's Terminology Services, and more recently, LC's ID.LOC.GOV Web service.

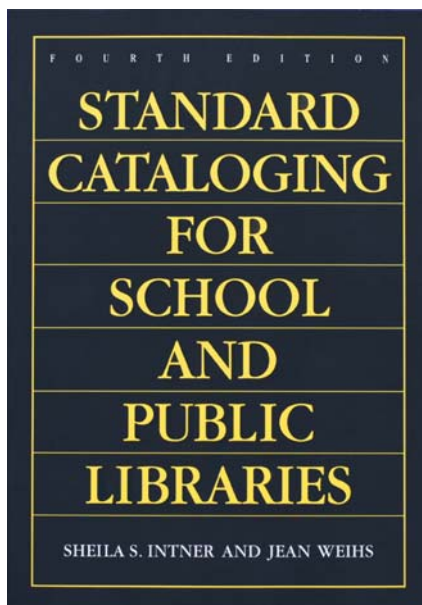
This article was based on a series of presentations on social tagging, folksonomies and controlled vocabularies given during 2008. For further information visit <http://www.personal.kent.edu/~mbmaurer/> to find the presentations as well as extensive bibliographies on folksonomies and controlled vocabularies.

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Sheila S. Intner and Jean Weihs. *Standard Cataloging for School and Public Libraries*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 286 p. 978-1-59158-378-3. \$50.00 (pbk.).

You expect a book written by a pair of Margaret Mann Citation winners to be well grounded in cataloging theory and practice. This book is. But what is still really lovely about this 4th edition of *Standard Cataloging for School and Public Libraries* is how easily it reads; it is extremely accessible. Designed as an introductory text for practicing librarians, it uses clear precise prose to fully explain the principles and standards underlying cataloging classification and indexing.

This new edition has been generously updated by the authors. Much has happened in the cataloging world since the publication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition in 2001. Intner and Weihs recognize that we are at a crossroads, and that the very nature of our work is changing. They comment on the looming presence of RDA in the preface to the book, and on the changing relationship between the Library of Congress and catalogers working in local libraries and media centers.



The changes introduced into the book are welcome, and well done. Less necessary historical material has been abandoned, and the focus has therefore tightened, resulting in a significantly shorter publication. The indices have been expanded and now also provide access to types of media, access points, description and classification.

Remaining chapters have been consolidated and updated. Cataloging standards for description and access are all discussed with an eye to their problematic bits. History and context are provided for these discussions, which can be most useful when trying to understand why something is done the way that it is.

For catalogers learning on their feet in busy cataloging departments, this text is indispensable. And updating the edition at hand makes sense, when it is done so well.

## Upcoming Elections

At the end of June OLC will initiate its 2009 elections. As OLC members we will have the opportunity to elect our choices from the following candidates for Action Council. Congratulations to those who are running for office! The TS Division appreciates your willingness to run.

### **Christine Burroughs, Technical Services Librarian, Shaker Heights Public Library**

I think that the OLC Technical Services Division should continue to act as a forum for discussing standards, procedures and new technologies used in cataloging, acquisitions and collection development. I also believe that the Division should explore collaboration with other divisions with the goal of discussing the means to provide the most accurate and efficient methods for retrieving all formats of information in our catalogs.

### **Deborah Malecha, Head of Technical Services, The Delaware County Public Library**

I think Technical Services librarianship is a vital and dynamic part of any library. Technical Services holds the keys to our customers' ability to connect with the information they want and need. Thank you for the opportunity.

### **Aaron Smith, Cataloging Librarian, Genealogy Center, Allen County Public Library**

My rewarding experience serving as secretary for OLC's Adult Services Action Council helped me to know the importance of this work. The TS Action Council has a formative voice in determining OLC programming. This is important at a time when the cataloging playing field is changing radically, and as we find ourselves debating such previously widely accepted assumptions as controlled vocabulary and MARC standards. The TS Action Council offers potential to help us all adapt and grow, and for our institutions to thrive.

### **Marilyn L. Zielinski, Manager of Technical Services, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library**

Although I am new to the Technical Services world, I have always had a healthy respect for the detailed work and processes that are done to make sure our various publics can find the materials and information they need. As I work my way around the room, I am amazed by the attention to detail and high level of commitment. I want to serve on Action Council so I can share our experiences and learn from the experiences of others.

## TS Division Programs Presented at 2009 Chapter Conferences

***Another Series Scandal?*** *Katie Page, Dayton Metro Library.* The latest scandal to hit the world of series access is the obsolescence of the 440 field. How will you handle providing access to series in the wake of this decision? What will you do about the 440s already scattered throughout your library's catalog?

***Communicating with Vendors.*** *Angela R. Johnson, Pickaway County District Library.* From purchasing to cataloging to processing, we rely on vendors to provide us with products and services, but we are often unsatisfied with the results. How can we get the most from vendors and arrive at a mutually beneficial arrangement?

***Retracing our Steps in Processing: Innovative Streamlining Tips.*** *Mark Mabelitini, Tipp City Public Library and Robin Nesbitt, Columbus Metropolitan Library, or Bonnie Banks, Amos Memorial Public Library and Carol Mitchell, Greene County Public Library or Marisa Glaviano, Westerville Public Library.* A hands-on show-off program of great ideas and examples of innovations in processing materials for large and small public libraries. The presenters demonstrated specific, dramatic changes they've made in their library systems for economic, time or other considerations.