

Lesson 10 Discussion

By Saturday, please respond to one of the following questions:

1. Olivas and McCurley and Folsom advocate moving across divisional lines for librarians. What do you think of their suggestions? If you work in a library, do you think that cross-training for librarians would work in your library? Why or why not? What would be gained? What would be lost?
2. Donlon argues that reference librarians would benefit from paying attention to changes that OCLC makes in its cataloging practices. Other than the example she offers and the examples from the lecture notes, can you think of situations in which knowledge of cataloging would benefit reference work? How does the knowledge you gained in your cataloging class relate to the content of this class?
3. Carlin describes some of the shortcomings of our current OPACs and describes how a few new products could improve the way that OPACs function. In an ideal world, what features would be present in the OPACs that you use? What do you find particularly clunky or annoying about OPACs that you use?
4. Respond to any other idea in the readings or lecture notes that struck you.

Response to Question 2

As a library school student who has taken LIBR 248, Beginning Cataloging and Classification, and is currently taking the advanced class, LIBR 249, I do feel that the technical knowledge I have learned can help me in reference situations. Donlan's (2007) article offers a good example of how technical knowledge of series statements can aid librarians in helping patrons retrieve records for items belonging to a series. The class lecture notes also discuss instances in which knowledge of uniform titles can be helpful in helping patrons distinguish records. For example, during my observation of an academic reference librarian, he showed me a search a patron had done that retrieved two results for an item that were both published in the same year. The two records actually weren't representatives of two different items at all. Both the records were for the exact same item. This can be very confusing to patrons! When the MARC record is opened, a person with knowledge of cataloging can see that one result is being pulled from the uniform title field (MARC 130) and the other from the title and statement of responsibility field (MARC 245).

Another example where cataloging knowledge can be handy in reference interaction is showing patrons that besides title keyword searching, patrons can try searching by subject, either subject keyword or subject exact searching. Once a worthy book is found, patrons should be advised to click on the hyperlinked subject headings in the particular book record to find other similarly classed items. We can also advise patrons that they can physically browse the areas next to their hot ticket item in the stacks for similar works. Subject exact searching can be a little more difficult for patrons because, well, they need to get the controlled language just

right. Say a patron wants to find books on a certain topic and is having trouble retrieving relevant results through keyword searching, such as books on the elderly who live in urban areas. With a knowledge of how cataloging tools work, one could log into OCLC Connexion, and find subject headings that might be helpful and offer the patron several headings to try, such as the authorized headings (an authorized heading is one that is found in the 150 field within Connexion) Urban elderly and Older people. The scope note, which tells the cataloger what the heading encompasses, indicates the following for Urban elderly: “†i Here are entered works on older people living in urban areas. This heading may be divided geographically by names of individual regions, countries, states, etc. Works on older people living in individual cities, city regions, or metropolitan areas are entered under the heading †a Older people †i with the appropriate geographic subdivision.” The cataloger can also see a list of other authorized terms that are broader than Urban elderly (found in 550 fields), such as City Dwellers and Older people. Terms in the 450s are terms that are not authorized but will lead a cataloger to the main authorized heading if one of these is entered, such as Elderly older people. The scope note for Older people reads, “†i Here are entered works on people older than middle age.” Urban elderly is definitely more specific than Older people.

I realize that my example might sound very strange without having used OCLC Connexion on the job or for class assignments. I feel like I have learned tons more about searching by having made basic cataloging records in both LIBR 248 and 249. I do recommend at least taking LIBR 248.

References

Donlan, R. (2007). An unfortunate event for series, or, LC outsourced you back. *Reference Librarian*, 47(2),95-99.