Research and the Librarian

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INNOVATIVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR SCIENCE, BUSINESS AND EDUCATION, IIT-2013
Vilnius, 14-16 November 2013
"How important is it to you that your college or university library provides each of the functions below or serves in the capacity listed below?" Percent rating each as very important, over time.


Discovery potpourri

- Discovery
- LMS
- Digital content
- Archives
- SHL website

Medium term

Discovery

BLMS  Digital content & ePrints  Archives  SHL website

You're telling me I have to search for books & articles

In TWO different places?!
Ranganathan’s Laws

1. Books are for use.
2. Every reader his book.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. The library is a growing organism.
Objects

1. To enable a person to find a book of which either
   (A) the author
   (B) the title
   (C) the subject is known.
2. To show what the library has
   (D) by a given author
   (E) on a given subject
   (F) in a given kind of literature
3. To assist in the choice of a book
   (G) as to its edition (bibliographically)
   (H) as to its character (literary or topical)

FRBR User Tasks

• using the data to find materials that correspond to the user’s stated search criteria…
• using the data retrieved to identify an entity …
• using the data to select an entity that is appropriate to the user’s needs …
• using the data in order to acquire or obtain access to the entity described …

Versioning in the digital collection

Electronic versions

Images

Searchable PDF

Plain text UTF-8

Versioning

http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/cmsw/burns/
“Extreme Versioning”

But is it the quantity or the quality of error that really matters?

Borel’s *singes dactylographes* more likely to produce millions of errors than text of the quality of Shakespeare ...

Barker & Lucas, “Wicked Bible” 1631
More typical versioning

First Published
Second Edition
Third Edition
Fourth Edition
Fifth Edition
Sixth Edition
Seventh Edition
Eighth Edition
Ninth Edition
Tenth Edition
Eleventh Edition
Twelfth Edition
Thirteenth and Cheaper Edition
Fourteenth Edition (Cheap Form)
Fifteenth Edition (Cheap Form)
Sixteenth Edition (Cheap Form)
Seventeenth Edition (Cheap Form)
Eighteenth Edition (Cheap Form)
Nineteenth Edition (Cheap Form)
Twentieth Edition (Cheap Form)
Twenty-first Edition (Cheap Form)
Twenty-second Edition (Cheap Form)
Twenty-third Edition (Cheap Form)
Twenty-Fourth Edition (Cheap Form)

October 14th 1926
October 1926
January 1927
July 1927
November 1927
May 1928
November 1928
January 1929
December 1929
September 1930
October 1931
July 1933
September 1934
November 1934
May 1935
April 1936
April 1937
November 1937
May 1938
November 1938
April 1939
September 1939
January 1940
1941
“Key Findings
• Hidden collections remain an immense problem for UK libraries. Over 13 million volumes are uncatalogued in the libraries that responded, over 18.5% of the total number of volumes held by those libraries. Over 4 million more (in a smaller number of libraries) have unsatisfactory catalogue records.”

~ Hidden collections: report of the findings of the RLUK Retrospective Cataloguing Survey in association with the London Library. RLUK, 2012,
http://www.rluk.ac.uk/content/rluk-hidden-collections-report
“Key Findings
• Some sectors have more hidden collections than others. Museums, public libraries and independent libraries have a higher proportion of collections which are invisible online ...
• Modern material is being added to the backlogs. The presence of 21st century materials in the backlogs suggests some libraries are unable to keep up even with current acquisitions”

~ Hidden collections: report of the findings of the RLUK Retrospective Cataloguing Survey in association with the London Library. RLUK, 2012,
http://www.rluk.ac.uk/content/rluk-hidden-collections-report
“Key Findings

• Foreign language material and formats which require particular skills and expertise (maps, music, archives) are heavily represented.

• There are serious problems in collating and comparing metrics for materials other than printed books.”

“Key Findings
• Librarians are aware of the problem and are actively trying to tackle the backlogs; over 60% have retrospective cataloguing projects under way. However, the scale of the problem is often beyond individual institutions. Respondents support an online register of retrospective cataloguing and are interested in exploring national initiatives and technical solutions …”

“To my surprise I found that many of these remarkable books, though faithfully preserved and catalogued, and available for decades and sometimes for centuries to public view, were wrongly described because, as it appeared, no one had actually read them.”

“The complex methodology for describing such decoration ... does not help, therefore, with the description of books without decoration. This is turn has effectively all to often given those concerned with old books ‘permission’ to discount them as ‘uninteresting’ when compared to their more rarified, but much less numerous, decorated brethren.”

“The day has not yet come when one can learn anything of a library’s holdings of jackets by consulting its catalogue … No one would claim that most jackets are major documents, but surely they constitute a significant aspect of modern book production. Collectively they form a reservoir of information that bibliographers have scarcely begun to tap.”

“Booksellers and the library workers who order, catalogue and circulate books are in the front lines. I encourage them to be alert to the potential of annotated books, and to consider what might be done to accommodate them and make them more visible. Far from disparaging or concealing or erasing marginalia, booksellers used to make a point of mentioning readers’ notes, even when they were by unknown hands, and this could happen again. Who is to say that there would not be a market for annotated books, if only buyers were offered them?”

“There was some consensus around the position that cataloging needs to be simpler, faster and less expensive. There is ‘too much hand wringing and worrying about each record: this is extreme and wasteful.’ There was sharp criticism of local variations in cataloging records ‘with little or no added benefit … Such ‘fruitless variation’ now looks a bit precious. In the 80s and 90s such variation seemed defensible, but no longer.”

Interviewees seemed to agree that however it is done, catalogs must blend into the user’s environment and engage users more. The user’s experience needs to be more seamless with easy movement between the services that occupy students and scholars – course page, commercial databases of e-content, repositories, search engines, and so on.

“Interviewees agreed that today’s research library catalogs are not the right finding tools for users. Catalogs are one tool among many in a user’s information universe.”

“The breakthrough came, for me, with the publication of Robin Alston’s *Books with Manuscript: A Short Title Catalogue of Books with Manuscript Notes in the British Library* (1994). Alston … used the newly on-line version of the British Library catalogue to locate everything recorded as containing manuscript features.”

Language of Bindings Network

LIGATUS

University of the Arts London
with support from partners

www.ligatus.org.uk/lob

http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/15_itwg_ligatus_bookbinding.pdf
“The problem of today, then, differs little from that of 1876, except in size and complexity. For essentially the same purpose – to guide the reader to books on particular subjects – two separate programs continue to be developed, the one by the librarian and the other chiefly by the scholar, with no planned economy between them.”
