BCC2002/Auth/1

REPORT OF THE ACIG 2002 MIDWINTER MEETING

LITA/ALCTS Authority Control in the Online Environment Interest Group
Sunday, January 20, 2002
New Orleans, LA

The open meeting of the LITA/ALCTS Authority Control in the Online Environment Interest Group (ACIG) meeting at 2002 ALA midwinter featured four presentations. Beth Picknally Camden (University of Virginia) delivered the first, *Selling Authority Control*. She focused on ways to explain and promote the cause of authority control, primarily to administrators who may be inclined to see this area as a way to cut expenses within the library. In Ms. Camden's view, the main difficulties involve a "language problem" and an "education problem." The former stems from the use of loaded terms such as "authority," "control," and "maintenance," as opposed to more positive-sounding terms as "enrichment," "quality control," and "enhancement." The latter problem derives from a perspective that authority control is "arcane," unnecessary in this age of keyword searching, irrelevant to digital collections, and of no interest to reference librarians. Finally, Ms. Camden presented several suggestions for ways to sell authority control, including being alert for opportunities when staff vacancies occur, maintaining a willingness to adapt cataloging rules to local needs, and using statistics and traditional management literature to bolster arguments in support of authority (i.e., "quality") control.

The second presentation, *How I Learned to Love ART, AMERICAN—20th CENTURY : Maintaining Art Subject Headings*, by Sherman Clarke (New York University) reviewed the recent changes to art and architecture subject headings. The text of Mr. Clarke's talk is available online at: http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/9783/artcat/acigrev.html. He began with an overview of the effort to bring art and architecture headings into conformity with the guidelines stemming from the 1991 conference on subdivisions, and then provided examples of art headings from before and after the 2001 subject heading revisions. In the area of heading maintenance, Mr. Clarke posited a "hard way" and an "easy way." The "easy way" involves simply using the library system's global change capabilities to change the headings. This usually results in rather "dirty" records, since most global change mechanisms can easily switch one heading to another but, on the other hand, cannot delete other, coupled headings that are rendered redundant by that switch. The "hard way" involves looking at each bibliographic record and making the changes manually, in some instances while also performing a subject analysis of the title.

Following this, Rebecca Dean (OCLC) discussed *FAST : Simplified Subject Headings for Metadata*. FAST stands for "Faceted Application of Subject Terminology," OCLC's attempt to provide a mechanism for applying LC subject headings to (primarily) digital collections. FAST is predicated on four major requirements: to be simple and easy to apply and comprehend; to be intuitive so that sophisticated training in subject indexing and classification is not required in order to implement; to be logical; and to be scalable for implementation for projects of varying degrees of complexity. Basically, FAST utilizes standard LCSH terminology, but breaks LCSH strings into separate headings according to the type of component: topical, geographical, chronological, and form. Current FAST research includes an investigation of how music headings should be handled. Because the creation of music subject headings – especially those including medium of performance – is largely rules based, music is poorly represented by records in the authority file. In order to cope with this lack, the FAST group is developing automated rules to assist with the validation of headings. These rules involve the creation of an instrument table based on SCM:SH 1917.5, 1.b (1); functionality that will automatically "count" instruments (e.g., requiring "Quartets" headings to equal four instruments, invalidating headings that include more than nine individual instruments, etc.); and a way to identify stylistic errors (capitalization, etc.). Another area of is research involves the creation of FAST authority records. The current proposal is that, with the exception of some chronological terms, all FAST headings will have authority records. Additionally, the use of linking fields to 1) tie FAST to the LCSH headings from which they were derived and 2) link obsolete FAST headings to their replacements is also being investigated.

Shannon L. Hoffman (Brigham Young University) made the final presentation, *Authority Control and the Use of*

Faceted LC Subject Headings in a Digital Library. Ms. Hoffman discussed the benefits and pitfalls of using a FAST-type system for subject access to a local digital collection. Using FAST allowed BYU to employ student assistants for the assignment of LCSH-based headings to their digital collection, with minimal training or access to manuals and documentation.

Following the presentations, Ann Della Porta presented the LC report. She mentioned that classification weekly lists would now be available on the web at: http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/wlcabt.html. Also, authority records would be available for searching, download, and display ca. late spring/early summer 2002. The Web Authorities feature will allow users to search, display, and save authority records, however, without full diacritics. Finally, MARBI approved a proposal to establish a 670 $u for URLs in authority records (note: *not* an 856 field). Ms. Della Porta's PowerPoint presentation is available on the web at: http://www.loc.gov/ils/acig02m.ppt.

After the open meeting, a brief ACIG business meeting took place. It was noted that elections for several open spots will be held at 2002 Annual, including:

- Chair-Elect
- Ad Hoc Chair for Uniform Titles
- Ad Hoc Chair for Local Systems

There was also some discussion about the program proposal submitted in anticipation of Annual 2002. The LITA Program Committee suggested that ACIG investigate the possibility of presenting the program, *Real World Steps to Interoperability in Library Systems*, in conjunction with the LITA Library Consortia Interest Group. As the program is currently being envisioned, there will be two parts, each with two or three speakers. So far, ACIG has tentative commitments from Larry Dickson (LC), Bill Moen (University of North Texas), and Glenn Patton (OCLC), and is exploring possible speaking commitments from others.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Simpkins

Last updated July 18, 2002