BCC2003/Auth/2

Authority Control in the Online Environment Interest Group

ALA Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada, June 22, 2003

Reported by Marlena Frackowski, Chair, Authorities Subcommittee

The open meeting of the Authority Control in the Online Environment Interest Group (ACIG) featured a program titled "Authority Control and Unicode –Together at last" consisting of three presentations.

Adventures with Unicode (Shelley Hostetter, Endeavor Customer Product Manager)

Hostetter described how Voyager has employed the Unicode standard of improved multilingual codes to work particularly well with Windows.2000 and Windows XP operating systems. The code enables Voyager users to perform searching and displaying in many native languages.

Scripts, Languages and, Authority Control (Joan Alpern, Senior Analyst from RLG)

Unicode implementation enhances authority records through the inclusion of additional *see from* tracings in original script. In theory, any kind of script may be used in authority records in the future. Currently, NAF and SAF are limited to the Latin script only. For full implementation of non-Roman scripts in authority control we might need to wait longer than expected because this would require cooperation of all utilities. Future use of non-Roman scripts in 1XX fields will be determined by the source of authority. 7XX fields will be used to link to equivalent authorized forms in other authority files.

Implementing Unicode at the Library of Congress (Ann Della Porta)

Della Porta reviewed the work the Library of Congress is dealing with Unicode implementation. The transition to Unicode, thus fully accommodating MARC21 standards, requires the Unicode to increase the length of the codes from 8 to 16 bits or to 65,538 values. Another adjustment calls for increased space allotment for additional Unicode characters. At present, Unicode covers Latin, Cyrillic, and Greek. Arabic scripts are not yet fully available. The new version of Unicode (4.1) will include many musical and mathematical codes in addition to the original 65,000 characters. It will be released in August 2003.

During the following business meeting, Ann Della Porta reviewed the incoming slate of officers for June 2003 and held elections for the remaining positions of Chair-Elect, Secretary, and three chairs of ad hoc committees. The first edition of "Understanding MARC Authority Records" (Cataloging Distribution Service, Library of Congress, 2003) was distributed among the Committee members. The Interest Group's renewal paperwork was misplaced by LITA; Ann Della Porta will submit it again. The format of the ALA Midwinter meeting was discussed and was generally expected to be a reporting session, rather than a program. Plans for the 2004 Annual program were reviewed. An authority control bibliography that was being periodically and sporadically compiled by the ACIG officers will be made available through a publication. There was general interest in publishing a compilation of all of the bibliographies that have been distributed in ACIG's 20 years of existence.

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