

BCC2004/Auth/4**MLA liaison report to BCC from ALA Annual Meeting,
Orlando, June 2004****ALCTS Media Resources Committee**

- **Media Resources Committee ceased to exist.**

Following the MRC Listserv discussion that preceded the ALA Annual meeting in Orlando, the MRC members decided to dissolve the Committee. It came as a surprise to some of the members and associates as there was a plan to revitalize the MRC laid out at the ALA Midwinter meeting. The plan didn't work and MRC was not able to re-establish itself either as an interest group or a discussion group, and, more importantly, it wasn't able to muster enough enthusiasm and commitment from the current committee members or justifiable vitality to carve a niche for itself within the ALCTS. Therefore, it has been decided that this committee is merely a relic of the past and should be simply disbanded. Nevertheless, a feeble attempt was made to meet during the ALA in Orlando for a final closure and maybe a future-oriented discussion, but nobody showed up at the meeting room (except the MLA liaison, I think).

- **Examples of arguments:**

Brian McCafferty who at the Midwinter meeting agreed to chair the group beginning June, 2004:

*"[...] I can understand why MR was established (back in its ALCTS-AV days); it was a growing novelty-interest area of librarianship, and it probably made sense to have a group within ALCTS to raise awareness and push issues. I think those days are over. [...] It may be that cataloging is where advocacy continues to be warranted, but I think it's pretty obvious that OLAC is the group that is organized and focused on the issues and has a *real* (dues-paying) constituency to provide impetus. I think that what MR has done in this regard has not been much more than serving as a conduit to CCS for OLAC initiatives.[...] OLAC should be to AV cataloging what MLA Bibliographic Control Committee is to music cataloging. Interjecting ALCTS MR in the process seems like a waste of effort [...]."*

Miriam Palm, interim ALA designated leader of the group until June 2004:

"[...] When I asked for agenda topics for Orlando, I heard nothing as well. The Listserv I had the ALCTS Office set up is rarely if ever used. All this led me to conclude there was no overwhelming mandate to continue on, either from people surveyed or from any of you. Then Brian "called the question" and got regrets but no objections. [...] I haven't sensed the willingness to set goals and objectives and carry them out, in my three years with the group, and I don't think I have misread the situation that badly [...]."

Other members generally agreed with Brian's remarks, and only Jay Weitz, OCLC liaison asked for a clarification:

"According to my notes from the MRC meeting last January in San Diego, we had collectively decided to pursue the transformation into an Interest Group. Cecilia had volunteered to draw up the proposal to that effect, and Brian had volunteered to lead the Interest Group during the transition. What happened with all of that?" (...the question that also expresses MLA liaison's sentiment regarding this matter).

**LITA/ALCTS—CCS Authority Control in the Online Environment Interest Group (ACIG)
Sunday, June 27, 2004, from 1:00 pm -5:30 pm**

- **Open meeting**

Open meeting program titled “Fast, Slow, and Z39.19: Emerging Trends in Subject Authority control” assembled important speakers and consisted of five presentations:

1. **“ACIG Past and Future” by Barbara Tillett (Library of Congress)**

Presentation consisted of short historical review of how and why ACIG came into being, what is authority control and its virtues, existing authority control projects in US like NACO, SACO and started elsewhere like EU Author and LEAF projects, HKCAN (Hong Kong consortium project, or Russian National Authority Control projects. After mentioning existing IFLA standards, Unicode and cataloging rules she, Tillett talked at length about her dream, a Virtual International Authority File (VIAF) with same standards, form and structure used worldwide. In VIAF, each country is responsible for creating and maintaining the authority headings for its own personal and corporate authors and making national authority records available for everyone to use. Unicode standards, semantic Web building blocks, switching to different language, script and/or regional spelling displays, or employing FRBR in authority control will eventually lead to global sharing, and better service to users worldwide. Maintenance of such an international authority file and uniformity of standards applied however, might be difficult to achieve across the board, given regional practices in, for example, differentiating authority headings, that is so important in LC authority file, and not so in German authority records.

2. **“Z39.19 revised : Brief Report of the NISO Thesaurus Advisory Group” by Stephen Hearn (University of Minnesota)**

The presenter reported that the group is still working...Presently, it focuses on the Thesaurus standards responsive to, and expanded to account for the current Web environment. There are four major vocabularies the group is working on, that hopefully are finished by October, 2004: Lists of Indexes, Synonyms Rings, Taxonomies and Thesauri. The Group discussed also indexing standards, considered their usefulness (logical, not intuitive), pondered how many relationships need to be recommended, and regarded a potential for misunderstandings in usage of qualifiers. A draft, much more expanded in comparison to the original document, will be presented to NISO in October, 2004 for approval.

3. **“What Have We Got to Lose? The Effect of Contolled Vocabulary on Keyword Searching Results” by Tina Gross and Arlene G. Taylor, presenter (University of Pittsburgh)**

Arlene Taylor gave a short overview of history of subject searching, changing attitudes, methods and developing trends. She addressed controversial claims by some experienced librarians that some keyword searches retrieve records that only have one or more sought-after words in a subject string in a subject heading field, therefore the subject headings are not useful and should be removed from the bib record. Together with Tina Gross, she designed and conducted a study that gave an answer to a question of what proportion of records retrieved by a keyword search has a keyword only in a subject heading field, and thus would not be retrieved at all if there were no subject headings. The findings of the research study confirmed the high usefulness of the subject headings in keyword searching through documenting a percentage of hits lost, if subject headings were not present: 35,4% (38,319 out of 102,580 hits). A further analysis of the data reveals that for about 3 of every ten successful keyword searches, half or more of the hits would not be retrieved if there were no subject headings present. The study found that if subject headings were to be removed from catalog records (or not longer added to them), users performing keyword searches would lose more than one third of the hits they currently retrieve, which will be in addition to the loss of other functions and advantages provided by controlled vocabulary, like level of precision in searches. In addition, a keyword user whose search retrieves an overwhelming number of hits with a high proportion of irrelevant results, would have few option without subject functioning subject headings to find a smaller, more relevant set of hits.

4. **“FAST, a Faceted LCSH-Based Subject Vocabulary” by Edward T. O'Neill (OCLC), and Lois Mai Chan, presenter (University of Kentucky)**

Perspectives instrumental in developing FAST (Faceted Application of Subject Terminology) were driven by a need for a new approach to subject vocabulary for phenomenal growth of electronic resources, emergence of numerous metadata schemes and OCLC's search for a subject access system for Dublin Core metadata records. The subject access requirements for electronic/Internet resources led to development of the FAST schema based on LCSH rich vocabulary with simplified syntax designed for online environment that retains the advantages of a controlled vocabulary. It is faceted, hierarchical, fully established and compatible with LCSH. As far as authority control is concerned, the differences between FAST vs. LCSH might be summarized by the statement that for FAST, all headings (except chronological) are established and only established headings can be assigned, whereas in LCSH, while many headings are established, most assigned headings are synthesized by catalogers based on rules. The database is available at www://fast.oclc.org, however, its current version is not yet sufficiently developed for use in any type of application. Beta version is to be released in July 2004.

5. **“New ways of thinking about authority control; Functional Requirements for Bibliographic and Authority Records” by John Attig (Pennsylvania State University)**

Presenter talked about emerging interest to apply FRBR to subject authority control that parallels worldwide interest in conceptual model of entities, attributes and relationships to help thinking about current practices and standards, and function of the catalogs (not records) in relation to user needs. Primary objective of the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic and Authority record is to create a structured framework for relating data recorded in bibliographic/authority records to user needs by recommending basic level of functionality, by clarifying the function of identifiers or standard numbers for authority records and by assessing potential for international sharing and use of authority records. Global sharing of authority records requires knowing where cataloging rules converge and where they do not converge, to start formulating cataloging principles and rules on a global scale (IFLA Meeting of Excerpts on an International Cataloging Rules), as well as building and understanding subject thesauri in terms of consistent conceptual model that will enrich our understanding of subject relationships.

• **Business meeting:**

- Chair Qiang Jin convened the meeting following the ACIG program, and after the cancellation of a fire alarm in the Orange County Convention Center. She thanked Sandy Roe for preparing a press release on the ACIG program which appeared in issue 2 (Sunday) of Cognotes.
- Qiang announced openings for vice chair and ad hoc chair positions and called for nominations for the position of vice chair/chair elect. Linda Ballinger accepted the nomination and was elected unanimously. Shannon Hoffman agreed to serve as Ad Hoc Chair for Subjects for one year, filling out the remainder of Linda Ballinger's term, and Mark Scharff agreed to serve as Ad Hoc Chair for Uniform Titles.
- Mary Charles Lasater, liaison to the Policy and Planning Committee, led a discussion of the desirability, implications, and procedure for establishing ACIG as an ALCTS interest group. Currently ACIG is sponsored by ALCTS, but is not a formal part of the ALCTS structure. Being an ALCTS interest group would enable more support from ALCTS for planning and promoting programs and for doing publications. It would also require gathering signatures for a petition to be come an interest group, and more work to get a program proposal approved. It was not clear whether program proposals could reliably be presented after the ACIG business meeting at ALA annual, when they are usually planned. Manon Theroux agreed to summarize the issues for a decision at the ACIG meeting at Midwinter in Boston.
- Anaclare Evans reported on her work preparing a retrospective annotated bibliography on authority control based on bibliographies submitted by ACIG ad hoc chairs over the past twenty years and on scans of

Library Literature, LISA, and ERIC. She found that a number of foreign language articles are now difficult to access, and recommended excluding them. She and the students assisting her have roughly 120 pages of citations, and she expects to have a finished draft ready in six to eight months. She asked about publication at the LITA Publications Committee, and was advised to go to ALCTS. Margaret Rohdy offered to take the idea to the ALCTS Publications Committee, and Anaclare will prepare the required forms. Ad hoc chairs with additional bibliographical entries should send them to Anaclare.

- Manon Theroux presented a number of ideas for the next ACIG Annual program in Chicago. The idea to have a program structured around metadata and authority control or the more specific topic of XML- and authority control uses for non-MARC versions of authority and bib data, development of MADS and other XML-coded controlled vocabularies, received the greatest support from the group. Suggested speakers included Judith Ahronheim and Kayla Willey. Manon agreed to present the idea to LITA's program planning meeting.

Submitted by Marlena Frackowski
MLA liaison
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