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Do you speak Multimedia Metadata? Multi-format Cataloging at the University of New Mexico

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Abstract: This paper will chronicle how the UNM Libraries' Cataloging and Discovery Services Department is journeying, though specific examples, from a print-centric library cataloging operation to one that could take on large AV metadata projects. By increasing its knowledge base of standards and technologies and improving its flexibility, UNM Cataloging and Discovery Services is creating the ability to deploy new, rapidly adaptive workflows.

Background

AV materials began in libraries as the odd exceptions that perhaps one person was assigned to cataloging, when they had the spare time. As the diversity of formats increased, there was, maybe, a full time individual dedicated to their description and classification. Now we live in a world where nonprint resources begin to outnumber and overwhelm print resources. The one "special format" cataloger model is no longer sustainable. Yet, libraries still tend to base their workflows and operations on print. It is time for a sea-change.

The University of New Mexico (UNM) Libraries has undergone dramatic change in recent years, even more so than most. Due to a fire in 2005 and a flood in 2006, large parts of the collection were destroyed and replaced with electronic equivalents. Digitalization efforts are now ramping up, including a mandate from the University that all theses and dissertations be submitted electronically starting in the summer semester of 2009. Staff retirements, a reorganization, and turnover left the cataloging group a highly experienced, but small, force. However, as of only a year ago, the Libraries' workflows were still print-centric and MARC/AACR2- based, AV cataloging was assigned in strict silos rather than distributed, and processes did not scale for efficiency.

In 2008, the cataloging group was reformed as Cataloging & Discovery Services with an emphasis on metadata creation to best fit current modes of user search habits – and current users do not focus on print alone, or even print primarily. This reorganization, and the materials needing the attention of metadata experts, requires continuous re-imagining of how catalogers are trained, of how work flows in and out of the department, and of a rapid expansion of the number of platforms in which we work. Whereas only a few years ago catalogers worked in one monolithic database designed around a decades-old standard, we now can work in an ever-increasing number of environments with multiple standards. At UNM Libraries, examples range from a large gift of sound recordings, which formerly would have had to be cataloged by one person, to the creation of a digital archive for a South American publisher to be searched in parallel translations. This type of work requires a new attitude. Bibliographic control is now multi-lingual.

The Skill Resources

Despite the misfortunes that fell upon the UNM Libraries, the cataloging section maintained a rich if small pool of talent. In addition to years of experience creating records according to the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules Second Edition and Machine Readable Record (AACR2/MARC) standards, UNM catalogers had also been trained and practiced in National Authority Cooperative (NACO) and record Enhance standards for print monographs and scores.

UNM has an extensive collection of Spanish and Portuguese language materials, in support of its Latin American Studies programs. Several of the catalogers at UNM are fluent in these languages. Currently, Ibero language collections represent almost two

thirds of our print work supply. AV materials are not new to UNM catalogers. Several of them have been working with sound recording and moving image materials for years. The manager of the map collection also catalogs some of the cartographic material in the collection.

The Work

While moving aggressively to collect electronic versions of resources, UNM libraries still collects printed books. But books are no longer the whole story of the cataloging work supply. Many of the books come "shelf ready" with vendor supplied cataloging. And, as of in the spring semester of 2009, almost two thirds of the total cataloging work supply are sound recordings.

UNM's journal selection policy is that the electronic version be purchased if available with stable access to back files. E-book purchases are on the increase. The Libraries are putting resources, both in labor and dollars, into an electronic resource management system and search tool.

Until recently, theses and dissertations produced by UNM graduates have constituted a reliable portion of cataloging work. For example, in April 2009, 200 out of the 500 title work supply of non-Ibero collection volumes were theses or dissertations. In the summer of 2009, this will all change. The University is mandating that graduate students submit their work to the University digital repository, DSpaceUNM. No paper copy will be collected. These electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) will have author-supplied metadata. Without a plan, they will not appear in the cataloging workflow as currently arranged.

Another example of a digital collection is the *Abya Yala* titles. These book titles, from a South American publisher, will only be given to the libraries in electronic format. The Libraries plan, as part of an agreement with the publisher, to deposit them in DSpace. Had the books been print volumes, they would easily fit the existing workflow. However, they are not, and without intervention would fall out of the current cataloging workflow.

So, given all the experience and talent of the UNM catalogers, and no lack of an AV work supply, what was the problem?

As in many libraries, still, the workflows in cataloging remained print-centric, organized around one metadata language (MARC). Sound recording and video cataloging were "siloed." The music catalogers had been separated from the main cataloging group, and had little to no interaction and input into cataloging policy discussions. If their backlog grew (which it did, due to large gifts), they were left to cope on their own with the increased work supply. There was occasional help called in from the larger cataloging group, but no one monitored or anticipated the need in a systemic fashion. In the main cataloging unit, most AV materials were funneled to one cataloger. There was no large scale training for the catalogers in electronic resource cataloging, let alone metadata languages other than MARC.

Bringing it all together

The work supply presented opportunities for cross-training. It especially presented opportunities for catalogers to learn from each other, instead of restricting learning from one class, teacher, or supervisor.

In the fall of 2008, the catalogers in the Fine Arts and Design Library were brought in the larger cataloging group. They maintained their geographical base of operation in the Fine Arts Library (where they also have reference and collection development duties), but became full participants in meetings and the planning of the cataloging group.

With a large work supply of sound recordings, looking to expand the pool of catalogers to work on sound recordings seemed a practical step. One of the catalogers with a primary responsibility of Ibero cataloging is also a musician. There was a particularly large gift of approximately 5000 compact discs requiring assessment and cataloging. The music catalogers and the "new" cataloger met and devised a procedure to share this work supply between two physical locations. The cataloger added to the roster of music catalogers learned quickly, given his depth of experience with cataloging principles and personal knowledge of music. After about six months, we added another cataloger from the main group to the music roster. This cataloger had been primarily responsible for non-music AV cataloging – especially video, and had cataloged sound recordings in the past. This exchange of work supplies had worked in both directions. When we had an unusual spike in Ibero book receipts, the Fine Arts catalogers helped with the print books in Spanish and Portuguese on arts topics. This approach to work assignment and work flow has already helped UNM Libraries assign labor where needed.

When the theses and dissertations become electronic only, there will no longer be a trigger for cataloging (the receipt of the bound, print manuscript). To prepare for this new situation, we reviewed the Dublin Core metadata in DSpace for the group of ETDs submitted voluntarily by students in the past three years. We discovered that the

metadata, while containing helpful abstracts and keywords, needed authority work (regularizing names) and subject analysis. We were also concerned that enhancing the metadata alone in DSpace would still separate the collection between the Libraries' catalog (for the pre-2009 works) and the newer titles in the repository. We are fine tuning a workflow to alert catalogers of new DSpace submissions, to enhance the Dublin Core metadata, and ultimately crosswalk the metadata to MARC so it can be loaded into OCLC WorldCat and to the Libraries' catalog.

The *Abya Yala* titles will also be deposited in DSpace, giving the Ibero language catalogers more experience submitting to the repository, using Dublin Core, and using a metadata crosswalk so we may have catalog, WorldCat, and DSpace access to these titles.

In addition to learning new formats, metadata languages, and workflows, there is a paradigm shift in cataloging with which to reckon. Approaching every title with the intention of hand-crafting a metadata record is not a practical approach with the proliferation of information today. Catalogers can, and must apply there skills to importing and manipulating large sets of metadata in order to make our collections accessible. At UNM, we are working on a project to get full metadata for e-journals, which will require selecting a vendor, testing data, and processing reports of data that did not meet criteria or match holdings. While catalogers will apply their knowledge of metadata standards to this process, they will also be developing a new skill: project management. This is a shift from the piece-by-piece approach of yesteryear. When catalogers do create individual records, emphasis is now on enriching the metadata for the world (via OCLC's WorldCat), rather than just making edits for UNM's local database.

This world of information also gives catalogers the opportunity to work beyond the library. UNM implemented the Google Appliance to be its main search tool for the University's web pages. In 2009, the Libraries expressed interest in playing a larger role in the management of the appliance. Catalogers will lend their expertise to accomplish improvements in UNM's search results by consulting with departments in good metadata and web design practices.

Conclusion

The expansion of information formats is not simply "more of same" for catalogers. It is an opportunity to apply information organization skills in new ways. At UNM, we are taking advantage of this opportunity to become more flexible, to assign catalogers to the work that needs to be done, and to achieve better search results for our users, whether they use the library's catalog, the digital repository, or simply visit the University's web page. The container of the information should not matter; access to the content must be equal.