The following report was submitted by HOTS to SOPAG on 9/12/02. Concerns were expressed that the use of a separate record for monographic e-resources would diverge from the single record standard used for serials and thus adversely impact the user of Melvyl-T.   After further discussion including a conference call between SOPAG, CDC, HOTS, HOPS, and CDL representatives it was determined that adjustments to the merging algorithm in Melvyl-T would enable an acceptable single display to be generated. This information was forwarded to SOPAG and the ULS and the separate record approach for SCP monographic e-resources was subsequently approved in March 2003.

HOTS Review and Recommendation on SCP Cataloging of Electronic Monographs

HOTS recommendation:

The members of HOTS unanimously recommend that the Shared Cataloging Project use separate records to catalog electronic monographs.

HOTS asked the Shared Cataloging Project Steering Committee (SCP SC) to prepare a document discussing all issues, pro and con, regarding the cataloging of electronic monographs. The SC created a thorough and thoughtful document, which HOTS has now discussed over several conference calls. The document is forwarded with this report for fuller reference.

The method adopted to bring electronic and paper holdings together for serials records has been to merge them through cataloging into a single record, with information about the electronic serial added to the bibliographic record of the paper serial. The merge makes it clear that the holdings all belong to that one serial title, regardless of the mode of access. Once into that record, the user can choose the format for the desired issue. The cataloging work to merge the formats is justifiable as a saving in time and frustration for the users.

There is no clear national standard for cataloging electronic monographs. The first few electronic monographs cataloged by the SCP followed the single merged record approach as used in serials, in the absence of other instructions. However, what has been learned from those initial electronic monographs and others encountered at the campuses has led HOTS to a unanimous agreement and recommendation in favor of the separate record treatment for SCP e-monographs in MELVYL.

Reasoning behind the HOTS recommendation:

Merging paper and electronic records for monographs can lead to awkward and ambiguous catalogs. For individual monographs, publishers typically include the information about an electronic version on the latest manifestation of that title, such as the paperback reprint. The publisher may also revise the electronic version later without changing the URL, and include the information about this revised version on a revised paper edition of the resource. If catalogers have taken the single record approach to cataloging the electronic version, they may have added the information about the electronic version to whatever paper version that their library owns, which might be a paperback reprint or the original hardback. And when the electronic version changes so that it matches a different paper edition, deleting the e-version information from the record that it no longer matches, and adding it to the appropriate print-version record, is complex. If catalogers have instead cataloged the e-version using a separate record, that record can simply be replaced with a new or revised record for the e-version.

Creating a separate record from a single merged record:

The SCP report explains the MARC preprocessing that would be required to convert single records to separate records. HOTS agreed that this should be a standard process performed by the cataloging agency creating the SCP records, rather than something that has to be done by each campus using SCP records.

Realities of the environment:

The local catalogs and MELVYL already have a mixture of treatments for e-monographs. Government publications are being cataloged with merged, single records by GPO, and some titles individually purchased and cataloged by the libraries also have the information for e-monographs integrated into the copy for the paper version. Local libraries may continue to find it quicker and easier to accept such copy. However, particularly for the large sets likely to be cataloged by the SCP, the ability to quickly add separate records -- and later delete or suppress them if necessary -- speaks strongly to value of the separate record approach.