

**UCSD Metadata Services Dept. input to UCSD Libraries BSTF Response
March 24, 2006**

1. Which 3-5 of these 15 major headings do you think are the most important for UC to address?

- II.1 Create a single catalog interface for all of UC
- I.1 Provide users with direct access to item
- I.5 Offer better navigation of large sets of search results
- III.1 Rearchitect cataloging workflow (although many object to the word “rearchitect”)

2. For each of the 3-5 major headings selected above:

- Which of the sub-recommendations do you think should be given the highest priority; that is, which do you think UC should address first and why?

- I.5a Implement FRBR concepts (same as I.5)
- III.1a View UC cataloging as a single enterprise (see below)
- I.1a Have UC eLinks take you to a logical, default choice
- III.4a Encourage the creation of metadata by vendors

- Are there any recommendations that you think should be added? Why?
- Are there any recommendations that you think should NOT be pursued? Why not?

III.2c Consider using controlled vocabularies for only name, uniform title, date, and place... The group felt strongly that controlled vocabulary assignment for topical headings remains an important key to access. Concepts that are known by different names (Iraq War/American War of Aggression) would not be pulled together in a keyword search and users would not benefit from other perspectives. Form and genre headings (or form/genre subdivisions) which are important for searching (as well as faceting of large result sets) are rarely available as part of full text or table of contents. Continued support of classification, and open, browsable stacks was expressed.

3. Section II.1 recommends creating a single public catalog interface for all of UC while recognizing that more debate and discussion is needed to identify the best option for that single interface. If a decision is made to pursue this recommendation, which of the two options that the Task Force analyzed would you recommend, and why?

- Creating a single UC OPAC system
- Outsourcing the UC OPAC (to OCLC, RedLightGreen, Google, etc)

If you agree that we should pursue the recommendation to create a single point of entry for our users, are there other options we should consider? If you disagree that

we should pursue the recommendation, what alternative action would you recommend?

The MSD supported the idea of a single catalog interface for all of UC. One advantage would be that it provides a consistent interface for users whether they are searching for local holdings or for the entire system's holdings (which can also reduce the amount of bibliographic instruction needed). Users need to be able to limit searches to a single campus because they want to know what's immediately available. Branding for each campus shouldn't undermine overall usability benefits of a single consistent interface as long as major navigational elements remain the same. Better: the OPAC needs the ability to slice/scope the underlying data store for different campuses, groups of campuses, kinds of materials, etc.

The group also had two concerns.

- We need to find out what our users really want. How homogenous a group are our users? And where do the differences lie (between disciplines or between campuses)?
- The OPAC needs to accommodate and present item-level metadata for unique library copies of a work. In other words, records should be able to be customizable for a particular campus and to have that special information retained and presented to that campus.

4. Section III.1 recommends re-architecting cataloging workflow to view UC cataloging as a single enterprise while recognizing that more debate and discussion is needed to identify the appropriate mechanism for implementing such a single enterprise vision.

- a. If a decision is made to pursue this recommendation, which of the three organization options that the Task Force analyzed would you recommend, and why?
 - Coordinate cataloging expertise and practice across the entire system.
 - Consolidate cataloging into one or two centers within UC.
 - Outsource a greater proportion of standard cataloging work.

If you agree that we should pursue the recommendation to implement a single cataloging enterprise, are there other organization options we should consider? If you disagree that we should pursue the recommendation, what alternative action would you recommend?

The recommendation to "view UC cataloging as a single enterprise" received strong support from MSD. Each item should only be cataloged once, and that metadata record can be enhanced as often as needed, to the benefit of all.

The "coordinate cataloging expertise and practice" option (which was referred to in discussion as virtual centralization) received significant and positive discussion as both a practical and beneficial approach for leveraging expertise, reducing duplicate work and maintaining a high quality database. Although coming to agreement on common cataloging policies would take time, our perception is that our differences are due to

choices about what is most important to a campus and thus what receives the most resources. These differences shouldn't be problematic in a collaborative approach because individual campus enhancements or augmentations of records would benefit the entire system. Practical concerns for virtual centralization include the increased challenge of coordinating prioritization across campuses. It was noted that UC is already increasing coordination, for example through the Shared Cataloging Program and the newly-established CONSER funnel. It seems that UC needs to achieve a balance between simplification and customization of processes; both were noted in and valued by this report. It may not be possible to achieve both.

Suggestions for how UC could coordinate expertise and practice systemwide:

- Don't outsource to external vendors; "insource" to ourselves. For example, hire one UC-wide Korean cataloger to do all of UC's Korean cataloging
- Pool our outsourcing to external vendors; do a systemwide contract for tables of contents enrichment, authority control processing, federal documents records, PromptCat, etc.
- Build on campus strengths both in collection development and cataloging expertise, as with the Farmington Plan
- Share systems/technical expertise
- Extend the collaboration on electronic resources cataloging. For example, share expertise on cataloging electronic theses and dissertations; share infrastructure as well
- Promote better communication between campus cataloging units; listservs, discussion groups, a UC-wide cataloging Web site?
- Establish a UC-wide cataloging policy committee. We will need to reach agreement on cataloging standards and practices, indexes and indexing, workflows, single/separate record techniques, treatment/analysis techniques, authorization levels, documentation
- Develop a UC-wide glossary and common language
- Provide UC funding structures for pooled (staff) resources
- Increased coordination might require more money for technology and travel, but in the long run processes would be simpler
- It is important not to disenfranchise staff (e.g., communication only at the highest levels). The expertise and coordination must come from the right levels
- Coordinate approval plans and blanket orders across campuses
- Build more on shared collection development; promote the idea of a UC-wide copy for low-interest areas
- Share more detailed information about gifts offered (or accepted); UC-wide checking for gifts
- Centralize the processing of federal and state documents (as with SCP)
- Coordinate systemwide on digital projects and their metadata needs
- Coordinate withdrawals and transfers across the campuses

There were strong concerns about the possibility of physical centralization of cataloging despite the strong support for the idea of reducing redundant work. It was felt that

physical centralization would reduce the valuable local expertise that communication with subject experts in a campus environment fosters. There were questions about the practicality of separating the normally close working tie between acquisitions and cataloging. One staff member questioned whether it was wise for UC to invest in an infrastructure where materials would need to be shipped around the state in an economy that needs to be less dependent on oil.

MSD staff felt strongly that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages, and that all of the advantages could be achieved without physical centralization.

Advantages:

- Greater consistency in cataloging practices, especially consolidating various local procedures
- Could free up existing cataloging staff to do “more interesting” things
- Might allow for more cataloging depth and specialization, as various small workloads are consolidated
- Will reduce the redundancy between campuses
- “Best practices” can emerge from local practices
- The size of the UC cataloging operation could be leveraged with the system vendor

Disadvantages:

- Processing staff would need to remain on the campuses to receive and manage the cataloging shipments
- Relationships on individual campuses with Acquisitions, IT, Reference, etc. would be more complicated
- Centralization would be expensive to implement, but once it was accomplished it might save money
- There are many logistical problems in handling the physical objects centrally (shipping issues, thruput issues)
- Determining cataloging priorities would be very difficult; it would be hard for all 10 campuses to have an equal voice
- UC should review what we have learned from the centralized processing at the RLFs
- A centralized service would make it even harder for units (like Special Collections or archives) who acquire and catalog materials by more unusual means (it might be harder to share information and make processes parallel). Where would these “niche” units or functions report?
- Would uncataloged backlogs be moved to the central site?
- “Inprocess” materials would potentially be less accessible to users

There were also strong reservations about outsourcing as a large scale answer to the challenge of coordinating UC wide cataloging. We know from our existing outsourcing (e.g., languages where we have no staff expertise) there are still internal workloads, such as developing vendor relationships, contract monitoring and compliance, staff coordination, etc. It makes sense to outsource tasks outside of an institution’s core

competencies; business models have shown, though, that outsourcing is not cheaper and it increases your management overhead. Discussion points:

- Most if not all of the campuses currently outsource authority control
 - Even with outsourcing, in-house expertise is necessary to coordinate, evaluate, set standards, review reports, and resolve problems
 - UC is large and diverse enough to have an expert for everything we need; we could “insource” practically everything we need through pooling the resources of all ten campuses
- b. If a decision is made to pursue this recommendation, which of the three architecture options that the Task Force analyzed would you recommend and why?
- Create a shared central file with a single copy of each bibliographic record.
 - Adopt a single ILS for the entire University of California system.
 - Rely on OCLC as the single UC database of record for bibliographic data.

If you agree that we should pursue the recommendation to implement a single cataloging enterprise, are there other architecture options we should consider? If you disagree that we should pursue the recommendation, what alternative action would you recommend?

UC needs to have a single underlying data store because bibliographic (and other data) does not remain static, and making changes in multiple places is not a wise or sustainable strategy. Not only is it wasteful of our precious human resources, it leads to record synchronization issues to say nothing of the complexity of integrating data across multiple systems. The OPAC view (or multiple OPAC views) of the data could be outsourced, and layered on top of a single, central data store.

Shared central file – this option was not easy to understand, so the department was reluctant to endorse it. We assumed that it meant a shared bibliographic database from which records would travel “downstream” to locals ILSs, as opposed to the present “upstream” data flow. While this might solve the record merging problems in Melvyl, there would still be duplicate systems and potentially record synchronization issues. It would not improve coordinated collection development. This might be a logical step to help UC get to a single ILS, but most department staff did not think this went far enough.

Single ILS – this option received the most discussion, and had strong (but not unanimous) support.

Advantages

- “What we would gain would be incredible:” maintenance could be shared, record improvements could be shared, record transfers between systems would be eliminated
- Record transfer (and synchronization) between Melvyl and local systems would be eliminated

- The enormous redundancy in Melvyl (10 copies of the same record, each separately preserved and merged on the fly) would be eliminated; campuses could attach holdings to single bibliographic records
- The Shared Cataloging Program would no longer have to distribute records
- No more problems with inappropriate record merging (or excluded from merging)
- Database improvements—such as FRBRization—need be done only once
- Staff would not need to work in multiple systems when doing SRLF processing; all the information needed would be available in one system
- Time savings – the idea of only cataloging once, reducing redundancy
- Better chance of getting improvements, both because the UC system as a whole would have more clout with vendors and because we would be able to leverage more resources for implementation of system enhancements
- Cooperative collection development (being able to view materials on order from other institutions)
- What can we learn from our (earlier) Melvyl platform selection process?

Coordinating procedures across the campuses would be a challenge. The Shared Cataloging Program’s experience, though, is that despite occasional philosophical differences, the campuses have been able to come to agreement. There may be fewer differences between campuses in the cataloging arena—where there is a longer tradition of cooperation and sharing--than in other areas (e.g., circulation rules or ordering/receiving metadata). It's still unknown how much variety there will be between campuses (that isn't a result of technical needs imposed by their different ILS systems). There was also concern about specialized content being discounted or adversely affected by decisions that worked well for new or mainstream materials.

The agreement upon and purchase of a single ILS would be another challenge. Issues relating to this included:

- This department particularly liked the possibility of a modular or “Frankenstein” ILS, with components taken from different vendors. Can we pick and choose the best parts from existing systems? The various kinds of data (acq, serials, patron) need to act integrated even if they aren’t really housed within the same system.
- The importance of having our data in an open format standard to make enhancements and migration easier
- Customization is still important to accommodate local practices; some options for this include attaching item info to holdings records, or tagging local metadata so campuses can selectively display their metadata

- The need for assurances of adequate backup, both of data and for continuous connectivity
- We need to start with talking about what functionality we need from a system and then determine what system and workflow would meet these needs (rather than the other way around). We're not ready for the "build or buy" question. We need first to determine attributes and develop functionality specifications before we look at architecture or solutions. Separate data from storage from functionality.

OCLC – The department discarded this option as unrealistic, although it was not well enough articulated in the report to make it clearly understood. Although OCLC doesn't store/handle holdings, local bibliographic data, or acquisitions or circulation data now, they apparently have made a large (mystery) acquisition recently that could help in this area. There was concern that even if they are working on developing this capability now, it will still be too long in the future before it's functional for us. There were also questions about the impact such a move might have on competition in the ILS market (which affects our flexibility in moving to another system in the future) and the place of local, item level data in such a system.

5. Are there any other comments or suggestions you have with regard to the next steps that should be taken in following up on the recommendations of the report?
 - Good cataloging enables serious research. UC should think carefully about the simplification of interfaces, data structures, and policies. Our graduate students and faculty (and certain disciplines or subgroups) may need a more sophisticated approach. Different groups have very different needs, and even though a group might be very small their needs are essential to them. If we water down our approach to the same level, whose needs are we leaving out?
 - Awareness of the impact that our decisions will have on the wider library community. Should we be thinking more broadly (outside of UC)—to CSU and/or statewide?
 - We need user input (particularly academics and researchers) and should not be making some of these decisions without user participation. We need to examine the presumptions we're making about our users; our user group is not homogeneous. We should not oversimplify the needs of the faculty at the expense of simplification for students.
 - Clarify the goal. Is UC looking to improve bibliographic services or reduce costs? All of these ideas require a lot of leadership and technological support, so we need a strong commitment to this, not just money. Communication is key. Campuses will need regular reports on decisions, actions, and accomplishments that will reach everyone, and demonstrate follow-through. There needs to be a commitment to staff: re-training and re-tooling.
 - Please share the feedback/reports from each campus with all the other campuses.
6. Is there anything else you think UC should be doing in pursuit of improving bibliographic services?

- UC should be more active in the standards arena. There is a difference between content and format standards, and much more work needs to be done to get content standards to play nicely together.
- Look more broadly to access services, public services, and other services to re-examine their own local and UC-wide processes; bibliographic services are highly related to all library functions.
- How far do we go with “we” as the UC system, as opposed to individual campus identification and pride?