Acquisitions Common Interest Group
Response to Bibliographic Services Task Force Report
March 22, 2006

This report represents ACIG's contribution to the systemwide response to the Bibliographic Services Task Force Report, as compiled through individual responses. We focused predominantly on Section III, 1, Re-Architecting Cataloging Workflow (Questions 4 a and b), but members may have addressed additional questions in their responses.

As a group, we observed most particularly the brief attention given in the report to acquisitions functions as they relate to bibliographic services, which may reflect an underestimation of the contribution these functions make to the collective bibliographic record. The functional lines between acquisitions and cataloging tasks frequently blur across organizational divisions, especially as acquisitions units take on an increasing amount of quick-cataloging. This report discusses the impact of the recommendations from the perspective of acquisitions in more detail. The recommendations as seen through that lens offer many promising options in terms of organizational efficiency and improved service to our patrons.

1. The recommendations of the report are organized into four sections:
   I. Enhancing Search and Retrieval;
   II. Rearchitecting the OPAC;
   III. Adopting New Cataloging Practices
   IV. Supporting Continuous Improvement.

   There are a total of 15 major headings under the four sections (I1 – I8; II1 – II2; III1 – III4; IV). While we recognize that many of these items are interdependent, that is, some must precede or accompany others, we ask that you try to comment on them without considering dependencies at this point. Which 3-5 of these 15 major headings do you think are the most important for UC to address?

   This question was not comprehensively addressed by our group. Of those submitting comments, common headings identified by our members include:

I.4	Offer alternative actions for failed or suspect searches
I.5	Offer better navigation of large sets of search results
I.6	Deliver bibliographic services where the users are
II.1	Create a single catalog interface for all of UC

   Additional headings identified include:

I.2	Provide recommender features
II.2	Support searching across the entire bibliographic information space
III.1	Rearchitect cataloging workflow

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?

Sub-recommendations I.4a and I.4b as well as those under I.5 appear the easiest to accomplish as other systems and resources already perform these functions and software may be commercially available.

II.1.a. has been identified as being sufficiently complex and a fundamental development upon which other recommendations depend. III.1.a. functions similarly in that efficiencies gained here may enable work on other recommendations.

Items under I.6 could be pursued as opportunities for partnerships present themselves between the University and courseware vendors, Google and others.

- Are there any recommendations that you think should be added? Why?

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

One of our members expressed concern over the consideration of abandoning authority control for subjects. Some of the recommendations rely upon authority control of subject headings for their success, particularly recommendation I.5 (the ability to navigate large sets of search results).

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)

ACIG did not address this question in depth, however, those offering comments weighed issues of sustainability with the ability to customize when considering the option of UC creating its own single OPAC. Additional concerns regarding the option of outsourcing with a vendor were expressed about the vendor's revenue stream and how that would affect ongoing enhancements. While it is likely that the UC would be a powerful customer among a vendor's customer base, there is no guarantee that the vendor would be able to provide enhancements in a timely fashion. Furthermore, fluctuations in UC budgets may have an impact on hardware and programming upgrades during more restrictive budget years. The option of the UC creating its own OPAC is attended by the risk that such a system may not interoperable with future potential library partners (e.g. CSU, Stanford). Members offered divergent opinions on whether the OPAC should tie in to a single ILS for "back room" functions. One favored standalone systems for such functions as acquisitions, serials check-in, bindery, etc., that might feed into the single OPAC.

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?

> This question was addressed by only one of our members, who supported a single entry point for users for ease of instruction and authentication as well as interoperability with other systems). The design of the interface should allow enough flexibility and robustness to permit effective searching across formats, disciplines, and with enough granularity to be of use to users of all levels at all campuses. Extensive ability to customize and personalize the interface according to a user's ability and/or institution might be one way to provide this.

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.

      A recurring theme in the ACIG response to this question was the interdependence of acquisitions and cataloging. On many campuses there have been efforts to streamline operations across the two units, taking advantage of vendor services such as PromptCat, for example, to load full bibliographic data to coincide with receipt of the material in Acquisitions. It is common practice to download a full bibliographic record from OCLC at point of order—these are acquisitions tasks that contribute to providing patrons with bibliographic access to the material. In addition, the two units work closely in order to fulfill patrons' requests for material in process.

      Given the functional interconnectedness between these two aspects of material management, the organization options presented in the Report have significant impacts upon acquisitions operations. All organization models were seen as potentially valuable when applied to a defined category of material. Many of our members recommended a hybrid approach.

      In large part, the ACIG members did not favor the option to **consolidate within one or two centers** because of the ramifications for Acquisitions as well as providing service to the patron. This option may work for a limited amount of specialized print material or for digital material, and may operate under the model of a shared print collection. In the case of non-Roman languages for which there is limited expertise within the system, for example, it might make sense to combine acquisitions and cataloging functions, and to locate these centrally. The essential receiving tasks of acquisitions, including verifying that the item ordered was the item received before payment is prepared, would need to be maintained. Drawbacks to a consolidated model include the extent to which material would need to be shipped around the state, the mechanisms by which priorities would be determined for the various campuses

(i.e. larger institutions compared to smaller institutions), and the delays in service to the users waiting on material in process. Timeliness was noted as especially critical in serving constituencies such as those in the Health Sciences, who benefit from a compressed overall workflow from point of order to point of delivery and proximity of the technical service unit to the patrons.

The options of **coordinating expertise** and practice across the system and **outsourcing to a greater extent** seemed more viable from an acquisitions point of view. Coordinated acquisitions may entail shared approval and purchasing plans. Again, the efficiency gained would not be cancelled out if this can be implemented while minimizing the need for shipping material around the state, for example one profile with multiple ship-to addresses. Similarly record flow could be consolidated to provide for one file of records, and those records could be distributed to each campus. Campuses may still require local cataloging for some categories of material, e.g. special collections, or to provide users with local information.

Outsourcing is already a standard practice in the form of OCLC PromptCat records, however we are currently manipulating these records multiple times across the system. We may be able to negotiate favorable arrangements with vendors who provide catalog records to have those loaded into a central file. Better coordination of this enterprise would result in a significant reduction in duplicate copy-cataloging. Other vendor services, including non-PromptCat catalog records and shelf-ready physical processing, may be coordinated in the same manner.

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?

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.

Our group did not reach consensus regarding these options. Those who recommended **moving to a single ILS** addressed the benefits gained by being able to share information within one system. The collective decision-making process with respect to collections, from selection to cataloging, would be supported by a single source of information. This would be true for electronic resources (i.e., expenditures, subscription data) as well as print monographs. Providing a single OPAC would naturally follow from this configuration. Challenges or issues to consider for this option include interfaces to campus financial systems, concerns about security and privacy, and barriers to achieving consensus on operational decisions. One additional challenge, which has been addressed more widely by professionals in acquisitions, is the lack of standards for acquisitions data; adopting a single ILS would force us to address this issue.

Those who favored a **shared central file** with a single copy of each bibliographic record resonated with the balance this option would strike between centralization and local practice. Furthermore, outsourcing of cataloging would result in minimal variation in bibliographic records in most cases. This option was seen as a viable alternative to the single ILS model should the necessary connections between the ILS and individual campuses' financial systems prove unworkable.

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?

One of our members strongly supported a single cataloging enterprise, and questioned OCLC's ability to provide us with the required services and attention should that option be further explored. This option would need to be closely examined in terms of infrastructure needs, robustness, reliability, and OCLC's commitments to its entire user base.

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?

One of our members expressed concern over the recommendation III.3.b regarding Serials Holdings and presented issues to be considered in further discussion: What kind of serials holdings format do we want to implement, the Marc21 holdings? If so, at what level? What would be the relationship between the holdings record and the bibliographic record. Would it be a separate record linked to the bib? If so what are the system implications of such a structure? Would it be embedded in the bib record, if so how would we account for multiple formats? Wouldn't we also want to consider this in a broader way, i.e., include multi-part item holdings as well?

6. Is there anything else you think UC should be doing in pursuit of improving bibliographic services?

As expressed in previous questions, the group is of the strong opinion that bibliographic services should encompass the entire life cycle of bibliographic information from the selection process through cataloging. In most libraries, vendor records or order records become the genesis for the cataloging records - or at a minimum an "on order" record. The report doesn't really address how UC could be using vendor records for collection development decision making beginning with the bibliographer. Tools that support this effort, for example ITSO CUL, might be worth exploring to extend the ways in which we consolidate and coordinate efforts systemwide.

A balance must be struck between benefits gained from consolidating or centralizing and providing a high quality service to the patron in terms of delivery of materials. It may be determined that some functions require duplication in order to deliver better local service. Further analysis will yield which operations cannot be centralized in any effective way that preserves this high standard of service.