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The Transition from Print to Digital and the Changes to

the Cataloger's Role in the New Age

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Abstract

As technology changes, cataloger's roles within libraries will also change. Print resources will not die out any time soon, but electronic information will continue to impact how catalogers strive to adapt to the future technology. Catalogers have realized there are limitations to continuing the "old" way of cataloging in an electronic world and are seeking new tools for providing timely accessibility of information to users, maintain collection data, and a continuing access to archives.

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Information is increasingly becoming digital. With the invention of the internet, users routinely come across knowledge not by going to the library, but by using technology to find the answers they are seeking. Because of the technology explosion, knowledge and the act of searching for information has moved from print to digital. The sudden increase in technology has changed the manner of how library catalogs, and the librarians who create these records, operate. Catalogers are responsible for being the first in the process to get new titles of print copies out to the shelves accurately and quickly. Catalogers are also responsible for the bibliographic records, and control what is entered into the system for the easiest way for users to find the information for which they are searching.

A user-centered approach has become the more common theme for catalogs to compete with the ease of searching on the internet. Cataloger's roles are changing to include digital cataloging and provide thorough and well-timed accessibility for users, maintain collection data, and continued access to documents for archival purposes. This is evident as Simpson (2007) states in her article, "Catalogers do consider users central to their purpose and go to great lengths to provide access to the library's collections" (p. 507).

Accessibility for Users

How library catalogs allow a user to access information is one of the key aspects catalogers must consider when entering data into records. An electronic resource record is entered into the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) practically the same as a print record, but with small variations. There are fields to be added, like an 856 field for the Uniform Resource Locators (URL), a 007 field to denote an electronic resource, and if the resource was previously published in print, then a 533 field would be added to indicate it is a reproduction.

This metadata shows the cataloger's role is still to provide information, but also to include current data not previously done when in print form. Thoroughness and attention to detail are what catalogers are known for to begin with, but adding electronic resources into catalogs requires a few extra steps.

While searching online for information relating to the transition from print to digital, the website for the Montana State Library Digital Library Transitioning Plan provided some insight into what catalogers are responsible for regarding accessibility for users. The librarians responsible for cataloging these internet resources for this website state their mission is to make "information available to users through public access to state documents" (Montana State Library, n.d.). This is confirmation that catalogers and their roles in libraries are changing at a rapid speed due to the influx of technology, because these documents are on the World Wide Web as a stand-alone part of the library. With this change, librarians, especially catalogers, are transforming to fit this new way of retrieving information.

<center>Maintaining Collection Data</center>

The future of cataloging is changing rapidly because of the need for organization of collections concerning internet resources data. Marcum (2004) indicates that Google is working on an agreement with libraries to create a digital card catalog for the internet that can be instituted to locate information that is available to users (pg. 8). This agreement will only happen if catalogers can agree on a way to assign data for internet records. Marcum (2004) says that the "objective of cataloging…is to provide an intermediate level at which choices can be made as to which information packages one wishes to view or search" (pg. 8). Catalogers will face a role change by doing this internet repackaging, but will still be assigning the data about the collection of resources by describing the title, subject, usage, price, licensing and other items of interest to

users, similar to print materials used today. Taylor (1994) makes readers aware that catalogers are shifting focus to digital resources while still remaining providers of access by saying, "Helping people through the maze of online information sources such as the Internet is very similar to helping people through a maze of reference books, catalogs and classification schemes" (pg. 629).

As information and the future changes, catalogers are caught in the debate of how to provide users access to collections. While print cataloging and digital cataloging have the same concept, the cataloging of internet resources requires a reorganization of the catalogers work routines to create indexes and databases based on an understanding of bibliographic needs. These databases consist of documents that only exist in digital form, but others are originally print documents transferred by scanning into a digital form.   As Dorner (2000) explains, "In the past decade, many digitization projects have been undertaken…in which large collections of paper-based documents have been scanned to create new collections of digital documents" (pg. 75). The digital documents now can be searched as computer text files as part of any library catalog because catalogers are being trained to supply data for these collections so users can access them through their library.

<center>Access to Archives</center>

Providing access to archives is another way catalogers are being challenged in today's changing digital environment. Catalogers must adapt to digital technology to incorporate searching, and displaying linkage from documents that were previously in print, whether it is a letter, official paper, or photograph. It is important for libraries to continue to provide access to these documents for users because archives consist of documents kept for their historical interest. Through databases linked to the libraries website, a library patron can browse the collection of

archives, and see content rich in history, without ever leaving their seat. A cataloger would have to provide the information for the collection and create the files for the documents to be stored online. One example of online archives is happening now. The Wichita Eagle, a local Wichita, KS newspaper, is no longer being produced in print, but it is available online. Any library that continues their subscription with this newspaper will have to catalog it as an online resource for archives.

In the future, archive records either for libraries or the internet will become even further advanced. Catalogers will take on even more duties to produce these records that satisfy the users need to see, hear, and process new information not previously available from archives stored in basements or off site. Dorner (2000) also hypothesizes that an archival record available through the internet might too "include multimedia information where text intermingles with sound and video images" (pg.75). With technology become increasingly prevalent and new information becoming available catalogers will be at the forefront of new technology applied to catalog records.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Even though librarians would like to think the tasks of cataloging in the contemporary digital age do not differ much from the print times, catalogers and their roles are changing dramatically to include digital resources. These roles will still include all of the aspects of their print time jobs, but will require catalogers to have numerous electronic skills such as cataloging internet resources, writing programs, creating internet lists, and other digital projects to provide timely access of information to users, maintain collection data, and continue access to archives.

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