

Database Maintenance Advisory Council

May 23, 2007

Attendees: Lisa Bouchard, Rob Carle, Mary Coon, Sue Dague, Deidre Lisio, Peggy Mello, Lisa Pitkin, Carol Reppard, Bonnie St. Pierre, Julie Stump, Joe Thornton

Minutes of last meeting: Approved without discussion.

Database contacts

Joe distributed a list that Rob compiled of names, phone numbers, and email addresses for everyone who is on the 'database' email list. Because not every library is represented on this list, Joe said that he will again solicit at least one contact person from every library to be included on the list.

Contacting libraries about cataloging issues

A question had come up in email exchanges since our last meeting about following up on email reports of database problems, for example when no one responds to the original report, and a library or libraries need to be contacted to correct the problem. Joe said that UHLS will take responsibility for following up, and asked that the group send us a gentle reminder if a problem languishes for too long.

Resolving some cataloging issues

Related to the above item, we discussed the record that prompted the original question, and talked about possible ways of dealing with it and similar problems. If the question is about spelling, for instance (in this case "dog house" versus "doghouse") we agreed that we should try one or more of the following procedures:

1. check OCLC and/or other libraries to see how they handled it
2. add a 246 tag with the alternative spelling
3. call the library that owns the item and ask them to look at it

Missing items

APL had asked how long "missing" items remain in the database before being purged. The answer is that they are never deleted automatically, and that the libraries have to change the items' statuses to 'wdn' (withdrawn) and then either delete them or ask UHLS to delete them. We also agreed that deleting missing items is a local decision that should be done only after checking with reference and circulation staffs at the libraries.

Carol pointed out that marking missing items as “staff only” in Item Group Editor (IGE) hides them from patrons.

On the subject of IGE, Peggy asked when the best time was to run reports. Joe and Rob said:

- Try to run them as early in the day as possible.
- Any time a report, IGE job, etc. takes more than a minute to return a result, it’s probably affecting response time negatively for everyone on the system.
- Do what you need to do. Don’t cause hardships for yourselves or your patrons by postponing jobs that should be run immediately.

Subject Headings Workshop

We discussed potential dates for a Subject Headings Workshop to be given by Maggie Horn. The last time Maggie gave us available dates, 7/13, 7/16, 7/17, and 7/18 were available. We decided today to try hard for 7/18, and Joe will check with Maggie to see if she is still available on that day.

Follow up on Serials Training Workshop

Joe asked about the group’s opinion of the Serials Training Workshop, and the consensus was that it was fine. In the context of what UHLS’s expectations are, now that we’ve had two Serials Training Workshops, Peggy had asked, “What should be sent down to UHLS, and what does UHLS want us to do on our own?” Joe said that UHLS doesn’t dictate its expectations to the libraries because we don’t have a centralized cataloging operation, and that engendered a long discussion about the role of UHLS; the need (or lack thereof) for a UHLS cataloger and/or further database manipulation by vendors such as Marcive; and the state of the catalog in general. Because the Directors Association is deciding among a number of possible uses for some extra state money available to us this year, we discussed drafting a letter to them detailing the problems with the catalog and our proposals for addressing them. Lisa Bouchard suggested asking the Reference and Youth Services librarians at all libraries to tell us what database problems they encounter. Joe thought that was a great idea and will send an email with that question to the Adult Services and Youth Services mailing lists.

Use of Database Maintenance meetings

Lisa Bouchard had asked if it was appropriate to bring specific, difficult cataloging questions to the Database Maintenance meetings for discussion by the whole group. The consensus was yes, that’s a great idea.

Next meeting: June 27, 2007 at 9:30 at UHLS.