UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Memorandum
Office of the Inspector General

TO: James H. Billington
Librarian of Congress   May 3, 2005

FROM: Karl W. Schornagel
Inspector General

SUBJECT: *Preliminary Survey of the Cataloging Process* Audit No. 2005-PA-103

We recently performed a preliminary survey of cataloging processes within the Library. Based on this survey, we determined that a full audit will not be cost effective. Although we identified inefficiencies in the cataloging workflows, underutilization of technicians for copy cataloging and cataloging-in-publication (CIP) verification, and shortcomings in the management information system, we determined that the Cataloging Directorate is effectively addressing these deficiencies. Management is reviewing the same areas we would were we to conduct a full audit.

We confirmed that Cataloging management is undertaking a complete review of its polices and procedures, and rethinking how it does business, including better aligning its cataloging products with the needs and demands of a changing world and society. Based on our survey work, we believe that the numerous work groups established by management are effectively assessing how to streamline and reengineer cataloging operations and processes. Moreover, we were pleased to find that management is investigating privatization activities and processes such as contracting out, joint ventures and partnerships, outsourcing, volunteer activities, and service shedding (reducing the level of service provided or stopping the service altogether).

We believe a fundamental review of the cataloging programs, processes, and policy areas will serve the vital function of updating and modernizing the cataloging programs and priorities to meet current and future challenges. The Cataloging Directorate's ongoing assessment of itself is comprehensive (see attachment).

Notwithstanding the initiatives currently underway, we have two major concerns. First, the Cataloging Directorate's inability to effectively use the Copyright catalog record, at least where data elements between records may be common. Joint Working groups have been convened to discuss this issue, but no useful changes have taken place. Second, we are concerned with delays in implementing needed changes. This is due in part to the unreasonably lengthy bargaining sessions with Locals 2910 and 2477. For example, on September 30, 2004, the Cataloging Directorate's Strategic Workflow Initiatives Group

(SWIG) recommended establishing pilot projects to explore transferring copy cataloging functions to technicians. As of April 1, 2005, management and the unions had not finalized an agreement that would allow the pilots to begin. The SWIG report effectively addressed this problem area: "[m]embers of SWIG who have extensive experience in labor-management relations recommend that the bargaining for the next master contracts include articles setting parameters for pilot projects. The idea behind this recommendation is to develop a common understanding between Labor and the BA [Bibliographic Access] divisions of what can or cannot be done in a pilot project, so that the divisions can undertake well-defined short-term experiments on relatively short notice, without infringing on the rights of staff members." We strongly endorse this recommendation. In order to be able to adapt to a rapidly changing environment, the Library must have the flexibility to conduct pilot projects and experiments within a reasonable period of time and without having to engage in lengthy negotiations with the unions.

Another example of the difficulties management faces trying to enact changes involves implementing the "whole book cataloging" concept. According to Cataloging management, the agreement reached with Local 2910 allows staff to either remain in their specialized areas (Name, Subject, or Descriptive) if they choose to do so, or become "whole book" catalogers. The agreement did not require anyone to become a "whole book" cataloger. The result is that the Cataloging Directorate has divergent, and often inefficient, workflows.

In summary, we applaud the Cataloging Directorate's present efforts. Taking a hard look at existing programs and carefully reconsidering its goals and its financing is a challenging task. Decreases in staffing, technological advances, and changes in the way the public uses libraries prompted the Cataloging Directorate to examine the advisability, affordability, and sustainability of existing programs, policies, functions, and activities throughout the entire cataloging process. The nature and magnitude of the adjustments that need to be considered are not amenable to "quick fixes;" rather they will likely require an iterative, thoughtful process of disciplined changes and reforms over several years. Nonetheless, the magnitude of and potential disruption from related changes can be mitigated if the necessary policy changes are made sooner rather than later. The SWIG report highlighted the urgency of these changes: "[i]t is impossible, however, for the Bibliographic Access divisions to continue with business as usual in the face of burgeoning workloads, dwindling resources, and growing user needs for access to digital content and customized services."

Although we elected not to perform a full-scale audit, the OIG stands ready to assist the Cataloging Directorate with the much-needed review of existing programs, policies, functions, and activities. Furthermore, we plan to conduct a follow-up review to assess progress in weeding out programs and policies that are outdated or ineffective, and improving the efficiency of the policies and procedures retained.

cc: Deputy Librarian
            Associate Librarian for Library Services
            Deputy Associate Librarian for Library Services
            Director for Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access

**Cataloging Initiatives to Review its Polices and Procedures,
and Rethink How it Does Business**

Copyright/Library Services Joint Issues Group
Although this group is effectively addressing improving workflows, we found that efforts to augment and better use the Copyright cataloging records for the Library's cataloging have not been successful.

Strategic Workflow Initiatives Group (SWIG):
SWIG presented a detailed fmal report and recommendations to the Bibliographic Access Management Team on September 30, 2004. The SWIG group believes its recommendations can achieve efficiencies in the areas of CIP galley cataloging, CIP verification, copy cataloging, use of data for cataloging from nontraditional sources, cataloging policy and documentation, simplification of shelf listing, and streamlining of the subject heading proposal process.

STARS Replacement Group:
STARS is the management reporting system used to record and evaluate the workload of each of the Cataloging teams, as well as the time required to complete the process. Management has identified instances of possible statistical under-reporting. Staff we interviewed also believed that team leaders might not be recording data consistently.

Copy Cataloging Pilot Projects:
Plan to implement two pilot projects (one in Arts and Sciences Cataloging Division and one in History and Literature Cataloging Division) to assign cataloging technicians responsibility for searching for and copying cataloging done by OCLC and RLIN

CIP Review Group
The first meeting of this group was on Monday, March 25, 2005. Initiatives already underway to make the CIP processing more cost efficient include:
- CIP New Books Project: This program is underdevelopment and probably a year a way from starting. Book publishers will be able to provide summaries, cover art, tables of content, sample text, etc. of forthcoming books with their application for CIP data.
- Text Capture and Electronic Conversion (TCEC): Catalogers will be able to cut and paste from the CIP Record from the Publisher that has been input into the ILS.

Cataloging Workflow and Organization Joint Issues Group.
An outcome of this group was the Cataloging in Publication Division's decision to implement streamlined book staging procedures that leveraged the benefit of
Recommending Officers' review of new receipts in Copyright to eliminate a cumbersome and expensive second review in the CIP work area.

Better using the work from outside sources:
- CIP is working with Cornel University and Northwestern University to submit a full catalog record for the materials published by their presses.
- The GOAL W.2 Working Group is looking into downloading OCLC records each night and using this information for the CIP verification.
- Project with Casalini Libri, the Library's Italian book dealer. Cataloging Directorate sent catalogers to Italy to train Casalini's catalogers to do all cataloging including subject heading,

binding, and adding LCCN. Casalini may provide the Library with these enhanced records for a fee substantially less than the cost of full in-house cataloging.
  • Special Material Cataloging Division is working with AMG and MUZE to supply music catalog records.

The Processing Rule Analysis Group:
The group proposed that the Library develop a new level of cataloging within the MARC/AACR context, called "access level," to provide a more appropriate level of control to some digital resources at a lower cost than full cataloging treatment. It was clear to the Group that the Library will not have the bibliographic control resources to create MARC/AACR records for all digital objects. By adopting access level cataloging, the group believed that the Library would cost effectively minimize catalogers' time-consuming but often futile efforts to locate traditional descriptive elements on digital resources, while preserving the ability to perform subject and keyword retrieval on these resources. From December 2004 to January 2005, the Bibliographic Access Divisions conducted tests to determine whether the resulting records would meet these objectives: functionality, cost-efficiency, and conformity with current standards. It concluded that the library would derive substantial cost savings from access level cataloging, with no appreciable loss of access for searchers.