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## Bibliographic Control in an Electronic FDLP: Problems, Practices, and Policies

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What I'd like to do today is give you a broad overview of what we are doing at Willamette University to add URLs to our online catalog. I don't have enough time to cover everything, so please feel free to ask questions later, either personally, or via e-mail. I should also point out that most of our procedures regarding adding URLs to catalog records are posted on our Technical Services Home Page, and the address is listed at the end of this paper. Let me start by giving you a brief history of the cataloging of Government documents at my institution.

The Mark O. Hatfield Library at Willamette University is a selective depository, selecting approximately 20 percent of items available. For a variety of reasons, we decided against using a catalog record tapeloading service, such as Marcive. In January 1996, we began to catalog all currently received Government documents, working them into our regular cataloging workflow. Our documents assistant received training in copy cataloging using OCLC, with additional help provided by the library's regular copy cataloger. We have selectively cataloged older documents as demand and time allows, but the primary focus of cataloging activities has been current receipts.

Around the same time that the decision was made to catalog documents, the library purchased the Web-based version of the Innovative Interfaces catalog. One of the most exciting features of the Web-based catalog was the ability to link bibliographic records to URLs on the Internet through use of the MARC field 856. Given my position as both the serials cataloger and Government documents librarian at my institution, I recognized that Government documents offered a good testing ground for this new linking technology. And, given the fact that we were cataloging many documents for the first time, the opportunity to add additional fields to catalog records fit well with our workflow.

I started with doing a little research. After reading up on national standards for using the 856 field in bibliographic records, I realized that at that time there was little consensus on how this new field should be implemented. Knowing how long it can take to reach consensus about standards at the national level, and with the tentative blessing of our head of Technical Services, I decided to forge ahead and develop my own standards for our library's catalog. I'm fortunate to be at a small institution, where I didn't need to convene a

committee to formulate policy. I just started experimenting with a few records. The idea was that I could easily undo the work if my own decisions conflicted with national standards. Besides, being a native of Beaverton, Oregon, the home of Nike, has also made me a firm believer in the phrase "Just Do It!"

One of the first decisions made was to focus on Internet sources that had print equivalents. This meant adding 856 fields to the print version's record, and not create new records for each electronic version. At the time, this was a violation of the national standards regarding multiple formats, but I was able to justify my action by assuring my boss that the national standards would soon be more flexible. Luckily, I was right. Using one bibliographic record to link print and electronic formats, or what is known as the "single record option," is now an acceptable practice sanctioned by CONSER. And now, the most prominent users of this option are the cataloging staff at GPO.

The next decision made was how much information would be added to the bibliographic records, and how it would be formatted. Given that we had not yet implemented the Web-based catalog, we needed to find a way that made sense in both the text and Web version. I've tried to pick out a number of titles for examples that represent different situations. National Water Conditions illustrates the basic format on which we have settled. Viewing the MARC display of the record, please notice the 580 note field. We record Internet availability, the date the URL was last checked, and the actual URL. We've tried to standardize the notes as much as possible, but also allow flexibility when needed. In the 856 field, we use a standard note in the subfield z, in this case "View current issues via the Internet." This becomes the text of the link in the regular public display.

Let me say a few words about the note fields. We use the note field to display URL information because it allows more clarity in the public display than the 856 field in our text-based catalog. It also allows us to record the date that the URL was last known to be functioning. Since we simply don't have the staff time to keep URLs up to date as much as we would like, adding the date gives us some information if we find that the link is not working. Unlike many of my colleagues, the possibility of having outdated URLs in catalog records doesn't bother me that much. I guess I'm gambling again, this time on technology. I assume that library catalog systems will progress to the point where keeping URL links current will become an automated process. In the meantime, we occasionally run reports that pull together all the URLs in the catalog, and use Web-X-Ref, a link checking software, to identify changed or dead URLs. More information about our procedures can be found on our library's Technical Services Web page. The main point is that we didn't let the possibility of dead links in the catalog keep us from adding them in the first place.

Yet another decision made was not to include any holdings information for the Internet source. In the Innovative system, this means no addition of item or check-in records. The reasoning behind this decision is that the ability of our library to "hold" an Internet source is tenuous at best. We have no plans to archive Web sites, either now or in the future. We simply don't have the resources to do so. Another influencing factor was that holdings records would increase the amount of labor needed to keep the records accurate. For example, those of you who have worked with documents know that the concept of predictive check-in, the basis for many serials control systems, is tough to apply given

depository distribution patterns. Trying to apply predictive check-in to the update schedules of Government Internet sources is simply, in my opinion, a fruitless endeavor.

So, what began as an experiment on a few records has grown to the addition of over 350 URLs in our catalog. I wish I could tell you that I've established a systematic process for identifying and adding URLs, but this is simply not the case. I add URLs when I see messages on GOVDOC-L, when I run across a Web site when answering a reference question, and when our documents assistant finds one printed on the publication. GPO's work on adding URLs to records has also accounted for the increase in our own catalog. While we still need to edit the records to accommodate our own standards, it is still extremely helpful to have this information identified by GPO, and I'd like to urge them to continue their current practices.

As for ongoing problems, one of the most difficult is establishing criteria for when to include a URL in a record. At the end of this paper, I've listed some sample criteria to help in this decision. Unfortunately, I've had trouble applying this criteria in a systematic way. For example, making the decision to link a record to a Web site that is not an exact duplicate of the printed publication requires a lot of intuition and judgment. While it would be easier to restrict links only to exact duplicates, I'm not sure this is in the best interest of library patrons.

Also, developing standards for cataloging purely Internet sources has been a challenge. While I've cataloged a few sites, such as STAT-USA, the need to expand this type of cataloging is increasing, given that there are many Government Internet sources with no printed equivalents. A commitment to cataloging Internet sites has huge implications for labor and workflow, and also has the potential to redefine what we mean by the library's catalog. Needless to say, we have yet to fully work out these issues at our institution.

The final question is, does all this work benefit anyone? This has been difficult to measure at Willamette. We have only fully implemented the Web-based catalog this spring, so we haven't gotten much feedback from library users. Our reference librarians find it very helpful, and given the number of inquiries I've received, I think librarians from around the country also find it useful. What I hope, though, is that I will be able to report back at future conferences that our library users are making use of the information.

As a final word, I'd like to encourage each and every one of you to take the plunge and start adding URLs to your library catalogs. You don't have to be at a large research library. In fact, it may be easier to begin this task at a smaller institution, where policy and decision making tend to be less hierarchical and bureaucratic. To get started, talk to your catalogers. They may be looking for examples to experiment with, and documents librarians can certainly provide ample fodder. Remember also that you don't need to have a Web-based catalog to gain the benefits from this information. Putting URLs in a note field that displays in a text-based system still provides information to library patrons. Also, if you code URLs in an 856 field now, you can prepare for a time when you may have an opportunity to implement a Web-based system.

## **Resources**

Willamette University's Mark O. Hatfield Library

- Web version of Library's catalog

**<http://nemesis.willamette.edu/wulib>** (frames)

**<http://library.willamette.edu/screens/opacmenu.html>** (non-frames)

- Technical Services Home Page - Current policies and procedures

**<http://nemesis.willamette.edu/techserv/>**

### **Sample Criteria For Adding URLs To The Bibliographic Records of Government Publications**

- URL is easily identified and verified

Printed on publication

Provided by GPO

URL leads to exact publication

- URL provides more current information than print version

Print publication has ceased and information is only available on the Internet

Internet site provides up to date information

Update frequency of information can be determined

Web information may not exactly duplicate print version

- Information on the Internet has been publicized and patron demand is anticipated

Internet site has been publicized in the media

Internet site contains information of current and/or lasting interest to library's patrons