

# Strategic Directions for the Program for Cooperative Cataloging Program

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## The PCC and RDA

The Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) is a strong supporter of Resource Description and Access (RDA) as the successor to AACR2. We fully support RDA's shift to the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) model and its desire to engage with more fully with diverse members of the information community. We have already enforced a change to RDA for authorities and now have a fixed date of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014 by which time all bibliographic records created as part of our program must be in conformance to RDA.

And yet ....

We make exceptions to basic principles of RDA when we find it necessary even in some of our most traditional work (e.g., our guidelines for provider neutral records, microforms, some classes of CONSER work). As we look to the future, other exceptions seem likely as well. If we follow the recommendations of our non-MARC authorities task group report, we may begin to use authority files other than the LC NAF to support headings in our PCC cataloging. There is no guarantee that these headings have been created in conformance to RDA or that the authority records themselves adhere to the guidelines that we have established. We also may begin to generate identifiers for entities by mass uploading to international authority hubs such as ISNI or local/consortial authority files in support of BIBFRAME's light abstraction layer, again without guaranteed conformance to RDA.

Our mission states:

*Program for Cooperative Cataloging activities are directed at meeting user needs for effective access to a widening range of information resources. In this context, PCC develops standards for the library community and seeks to influence those in other communities. PCC strategically takes advantage of and complements the metadata creation efforts of others, encouraging the free and open exchange of data. Dynamic bibliographic and authority data, mapping across a variety of schemas, extension and reuse of metadata, and partnerships across libraries and with other communities are all PCC-sponsored components of a user's ability to search effectively across the entire information discovery environment. In support of those providing for this central user need, PCC offers training, documentation, and continuing education, as well as serves as a clearinghouse for best practices and an ongoing source of ideas.*

There is no direct tie here to RDA. As a worldwide community leader, PCC may have to step beyond the boundaries of RDA and FRBR to provide the guidance for which other communities are searching. If we do provide such guidance, for example, as in a set of essential elements for digital library materials and

these elements do not directly reflect FRBR or RDA, would we not encourage PCC members to use them or not record records created under them as PCC contributions?

Given all this, what is the relationship between the PCC and RDA? Can PCC make a clear statement on the place of RDA within its programs or should the association with RDA as a core part of our branding be tempered?

## The PCC and Alternative Metadata

The PCC has put much well-spent effort into the development of the Bibliographic Standard Record (BSR) and the CONSER Standard Record (CSR). They allow us to exchange bibliographic information in a clear and consistent manner and to the same high standard. Many institutions select bibliographic records created to the PCC standards as their first choice.

Metadata departments that are part of the PCC programs, however, are being asked to take on many new duties. They are being asked to provide metadata and authority management for an exploding number of resources. As more and more traditional materials are being handled through outsourcing, the digital library and digital repositories are often drivers of this new workflow. The sheer number of digital resources demanding descriptive metadata make adherence to the BSR impossible.

What is the role of the PCC in these rapidly expanding alternative workflows? In some cases, the answer is clearer than in others. A digital collection may require the same, high standard of descriptive metadata creation that we apply to our traditional materials. In that case, the BSR and CSR still provide expert guidance. Even though the metadata may be expressed in MODS rather than MARC, program standards have been followed and this metadata should both be embraced and counted by the PCC as program contributions.

But what about the growing volume of work demanding less traditional approaches? Automation often plays a key role in these alternative workflows. Advanced facial recognition software may be adding entity metadata. Semantic analysis may be adding subject categorizations. Metadata management may take place at the collection level rather than the individual resource and identity management become automated. Descriptive metadata is often brief but considered adequate for discovery. Crowdsourcing is often assumed to flesh out the original metadata with time.

Should the PCC be developing guidelines to assist in the creation of such alternative metadata? If so, should the data produced be counted as program contributions?

## The PCC and Linked Data

From its beginning, the Program for Cooperative Cataloging has been focused on cooperation. Among the goals stated by Sarah Thomas at the program's inception in 1994 were:

- To increase the timely availability of bibliographic and authority records by cataloging more items, by producing cataloging that is widely available for sharing and use by others, and by cataloging in a more cost-effective manner.
- To promote the values of timely access and cost effectiveness in cataloging and expand the pool of catalogers who catalog using mutually accepted standards.

The strategic action plan focused on the identification of a core *bibliographic record* that is distinguished by having all its access points under authority control. The idea of a core bibliographic record and the cost-savings promoted by a shared standard and shared bibliographic records created according to that standard were successful drivers in the program's initial acceptance and success.

Linked data, however, directly affects the core of these principles. Our record based economy will be giving way to one based on dynamic collections of statements describing physical or digital resources. If we are no longer creating bibliographic records to exchange, where is the cost-effectiveness initially proposed to sell the program to administrators? If the collection of linked-data statements used to describe a resource change dynamically as additional, world-wide data becomes available, what standard can be said to have been applied?

In addition, authority control itself is giving way to identity management. In order to take advantage of a linked-date enabled communications format such as BIBFRAME, all controlled headings (names, subjects, series, etc.) must be represented by URIs. The sheer number of headings to manage when considering not only our well-curated resources, but all resources in our catalogs, digital libraries, and repositories will make an approach through NACO unfeasible. Automated generation of headings and identity management work in local or consortial light abstraction layers in support of BIBFRAME will demand most of our efforts. Work in a shared, monolithic authority file such as the LC NAF will give way to identity management in a series of smaller, interlinked identity management systems.

How should the PCC redefine itself in this rapidly approaching world? What are the core principles and programs that the PCC should promote both to help its members' transition into this new environment and become leaders in its development?

## **The PCC and Accountability**

As with Metadata Departments internationally, the purview of the PCC continues to expand. As recently as five years ago, the accountability of a Metadata Department was closely reflected in its carefully tracked statistics. Bibliographic production and concomitant authority work were tracked by format and level of difficulty. These statistics helped support the rationale for the department itself and the staffing levels needed for it to fulfill its obligations.

The introduction of the digital library and the institutional repository, however, has dramatically altered a metadata department's sphere of influence. They are now often responsible for descriptive metadata consultations across the library system, development of standards for the digital library, mass remediation and upgrading of bibliographic data supplied by vendors, authority management for the digital repository, authoritative interpretation of standards such as MODS, and much more. All of these new responsibilities not only reduce the amount of time available for traditional bibliographic production but are also not reflected in the department's statistics.

Similarly, the PCC has carefully tracked its statistics in the form of BIBCO, CONSER, NACO, and SACO production. Ironically, as membership in the PCC has increased, these production statistics have decreased. According to Sarah Thomas at the inception of the PCC, the PCC's main goal was to provide a cost-effective means for the creation and exchange of bibliographic records for commonly held materials. As vendors supply copy for more and more of our commonly held material and we focus on unique items in our own collections, the need for the PCC to provide access to these resources decreases as well.

As all programs, the PCC must produce a return on investment to those administrators who wish their institutions to become a member. According to its original mandate, the PCC is reaching the end of its lifetime. The shift to a recordless economy, networked authorities, and vendor-supplied data for commonly held material has taken away much of the original impetus for its development.

And yet the PCC is more than record production. The standards it produces can be responsible for data production far outside its actual membership. Its ability to aggressively lead its members through difficult transitions can be invaluable. The influence its members have on both local and international resource discovery and retrieval is powerful.

How should the PCC best present its ROI in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What metrics should be used to justify program participation for both members and administrators?