Benchmarking Vended Authority Control Practices in ARL Libraries (Presentation)

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Background

- 1.5 million bibliographic records (now 1.7)
- Used a vendor to provide authority control on entire catalog in 2004 prior to our migration to Ex Libris' Aleph ILS
- No automated authority control processes implemented in Aleph, 2004-2014; authority control functionality not configured in ILS
- Some ad hoc authority work and heading updates were made
- Question: Could we secure funding to support basefile processing of our records, as well as ongoing processing of new bibliographic records and authority record updates?
- Question: Could benchmarking with our peers help us make a case?
Value of benchmarking

- Goals of benchmarking cataloging activities:
  - Improve or streamline services (72 %)
  - Make better decisions (61%)
  - Improve services (33 %)
  - Reallocate staff or other services (33 %)
  - Explore offering new services (22 %)
  - Inform strategic planning activities (22 %)
Survey of peer institutions

- Describe survey project plan:
  - Survey designed with SurveyMonkey
  - IRB expedited review
  - Surveyed ARL academic libraries (ARL includes 125 R1 institutions in North America, most of them universities)
  - Used personalized emails to heads of cataloging or authority control librarians
  - 65 completed surveys
Profile of responding libraries

- Public institutions: 71% (46 libraries)
- Private Institutions: 29% (19 libraries)
- Size of holdings range: 1.5 million-14 million titles
- ARL Library Investment Index ranking: 2-111
- Length of time on current ILS ranged from a few months to more than 25 years
Integrated Library System

- Ex Libris Voyager: 16 libraries
- Ex Libris Alma: 12 libraries
- III Sierra: 11 libraries
- SirsiDynix Symphony: 9 libraries
- III Millenium: 9 libraries
- Ex Libris Aleph: 7 libraries
- SirsiDynix Horizon: 1 library
- OCLC Worldshare Management Services: 1 library
91% (59 libraries) do maintain an authority file

9% (6 libraries) do not maintain an authority file. These included libraries with the following ILSs:

- Aleph (1)
- Alma (3)
- Symphony (1)
- Sierra (1)
Authority files maintained in ILSs

- Library of Congress name headings (97%)
- Library of Congress subject headings (95%)
- Library of Congress genre/form terms (63%)
- Medical subject headings (47%)
- Children’s headings (13%)
- Other: series, local, other form/genre, Canadian, French, Arabic, Japanese
Source of authority records

- Vendor: 73%
- Purchase directly: 5%
- Download individually from bibliographic utility: 35%
- Batch download from bibliographic utility: 6%
- Other (29%):
  - Create in-house
  - Alma community zone
  - Consortium provided
Vendor sourced authority records

- Backstage Library Works (44%)
  - 26% of public institutions
  - 42% of private institutions
- Peter Ward (20%)
- Marcive (18%)
- LTI (18%)
Frequency of authority record updates

- Monthly: 44%
- Weekly: 24%
- At the point of cataloging: 20%
- Quarterly: 14%
- Bi-annually: 7%
- Bi-weekly: 5%
- Annually: 2%
Local authority records

- 59% do not create or maintain local authority records
  - Ability to contribute to NACO precludes need for local authority records
- 41% create or maintain local authority records not later submitted to national files
  - Some create local records when they don’t have enough information to create a NACO standard record
- 48% make local changes to national-level authority records in local system (local series decisions, classification #s for literary authors, cross-references)
- 52% do not make local changes
Current cataloging

CURRENT CATALOGING

56% 44%

Vended Other Methods
Choice of vendor

CHosen Vendor

- None: 28
- Backstage Library Works: 20
- LTI: 9
- Marcive: 8
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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Staff involved in authority work

Staffing

- Students or hourly workers
- Clerical
- Paraprofessionals
- Librarians
Ability to stay current

- Stay Current: 48%
- Unable to Stay Current: 52%
Future changes in authority work

Changes

- Expect Changes
- Do not Expect Changes

60% Expect Changes
40% Do not Expect Changes
Conclusion

- Most large academic libraries maintain an authority file in their ILS.
- A majority of survey respondents are members of one or more cooperative cataloging initiatives.
- Nearly three-quarters use vendors as a source of authority records and more than half use vendors to process current cataloging.
- The options for vendor support have shrunk from 7 in Wolverton’s 2004 survey to 3 vendors (soon to be 2).
- 41% of libraries continue to maintain or create local authority records.
- Nearly half of the respondents indicated they are still unable to stay current with authority control tasks.
Suggestions for further research

- Inability of libraries to keep current with authority work
- Assessment of built-in authority control functionality, as in the Alma LSP
- Use of locally created and edited authority records
- Impact of BIBFRAME, linked data, and other developments on authority control activities
Questions?

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